

Ethical  
meltdown  
in Texas

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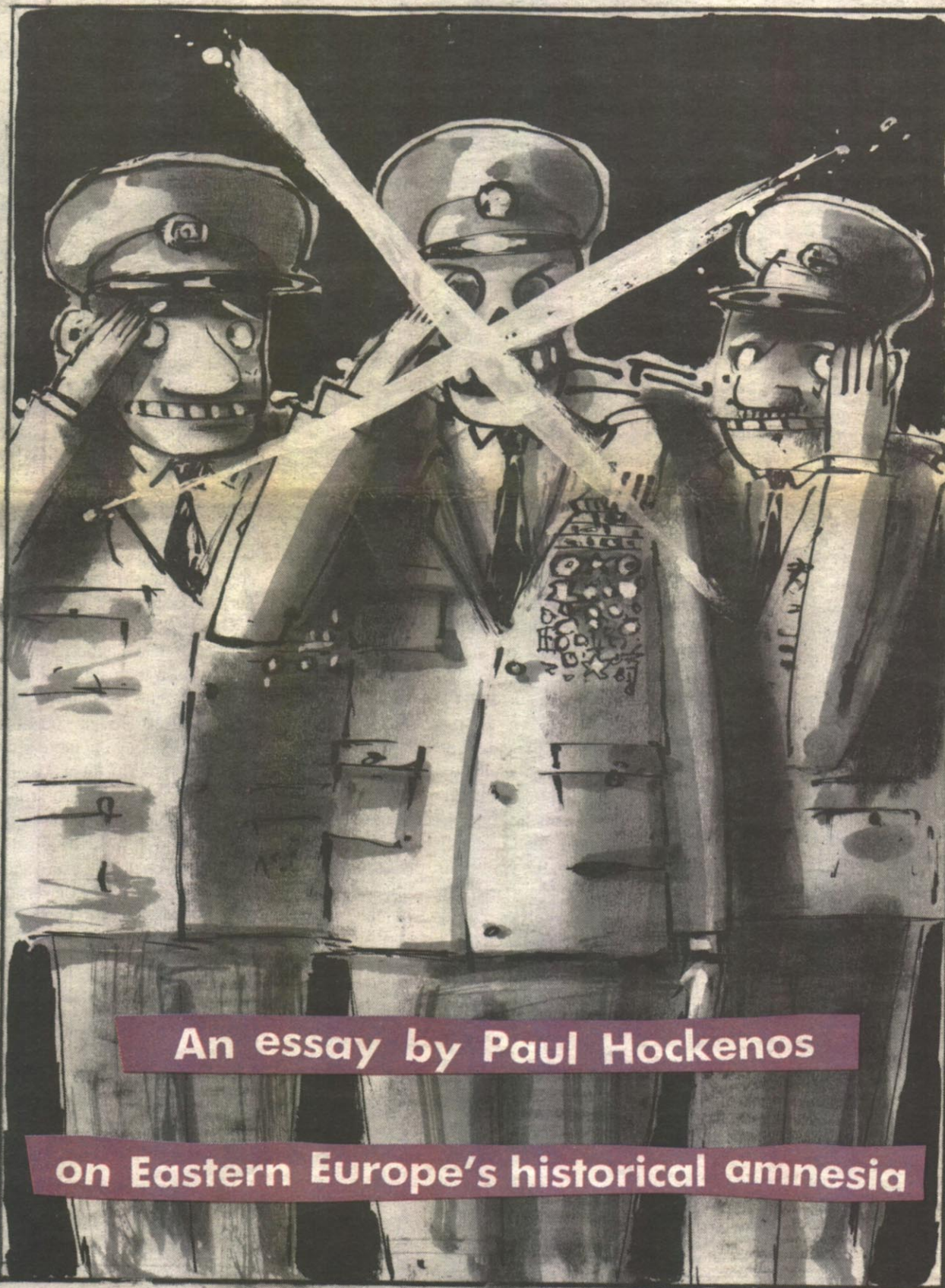
# IN THESE TIMES

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## STATES OF DENIAL



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An essay by Paul Hockenos  
on Eastern Europe's historical amnesia

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Recent election returns foretell a muddled future for French President François Mitterrand.

## France turning right? Not really

By Denis MacShane

DIVONNE, FRANCE

A reader of the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal* and other American dailies would be forgiven for thinking France has just experienced an electoral convulsion, bringing down the Socialist government and ushering in a new era of right-wing rule.

But the joyful glee of the Anglo-Saxon press at the discomfiture of Europe's longest-reigning Socialist president is premature. Unlike with the British elections that may produce a new resident in No. 10 Downing Street and the burial of the Thatcher decade, the left in France is still governing and still has options open.

A closer analysis of the French elections, not undertaken by American correspondents spoon-feeding themselves from the conservative French press, shows something else. Two important, unreported facts emerge.

**Making history:** First, France is experiencing the general European trend toward disaggregated politics. The

classic bipolar split in politics, generally a left-right one, no longer holds good. As in Italy (and in Britain, and in Scotland), emerging regional ecological and ideological peculiarities are creating rejectionist fronts against all postwar party organizations. The period of European history that began in 1917 is over, and no one should be surprised that political de- and re-alignments are accelerating.

Second, the French elections may produce an American-style outcome in which the presidency and the legislature fall under control of opposing parties. Although French President François Mitterrand, a political Machiavelli, will pull a handful of rabbits out of his hat, it is impossible that replacing Prime Minister Edith Cresson with the fiscally conservative Finance Minister Pierre Bérégovoy—or any change in the electoral system—can prevent the right from winning a majority in the National Assembly elections next year.

But this does not mean the end of a Socialist presence in French government. The Socialist vote slumped to 18 percent in the election of relatively powerless regional assemblies. But if one adds up the vote of all progressive forces—the extreme left, the Communists, the Socialists, the Presidential Majority, the Ecologists, the Greens and other greens—what Socialist Party General Secretary Laurent Fabius calls “the forces of progress”—the score looks quite different at 44.3 percent.

The joint mainstream conservative party list won 33 percent and the neo-Nazi National Front 13.9 percent. Other local candidates got the rest of the votes. In the cantonal elections held a week later, the Socialist score went up to 25 percent.

A disaster? Not quite. In 1978, three years before winning power, the Socialists picked up only 22 percent of the vote in the first round of the National Assembly elections and in 1981, Mitterrand's first round vote against Valéry Giscard d'Estaing in the presidential election was a mere 25 percent. Given that the *Génération Ecologie* Party was set up and led by government minister Brice Lalonde to be the green wing of the Socialists, the combined vote was more than 25 percent.

Still, the elections produced a massive protest vote against the Socialists that corresponds to all opinion poll evidence from the past two years. After 11 years in office, the Socialists—consumed as they are by corruptions and lack of imagination—have run out of steam.

But France is governed by a president, elected on a simple majority. Looking to the next presidential election—and no matter what electoral system is chosen, the

1993 National Assembly elections are lost for the Socialists—Mitterrand's successor as the Socialist candidate in the 1995 presidential election still has a solid anti-conservative basis to work upon.

The racist, anti-Semitic National Front did not make the breakthrough that was expected. Bernard Tapie easily outpointed National Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen in the Marseilles region. Tapie's pro-Mitterrand list even secured more votes than the official conservative list. For the National Front, which was running at 20 percent in the polls before the election, the result was a disappointment. Most notably, the National Front failed to make a breakthrough among young people. The 18-to-24-year-olds voted green. The National Front did, however, improve its score among workers. The de-unionization of France—only 7 percent of French workers are in unions—and the lack of anti-fascist, anti-racist union campaigning in the workplace is the reason why.

**Into the future:** The result leaves France without any clear pointers for the future. Mitterrand's reign will be over shortly. But he has said he wants to leave two legacies: the construction of Europe and a Socialist in the Elysée. In Jacques Delors he may achieve both. Delors, formerly the Socialist finance minister in the '80s, is cur-

## INSIDE STORY

rently president of the European Commission. He scores massively in French opinion polls. In Brussels, he has been responsible for introducing democratic socialist ideas into the construction of the European Community. He is a strong proponent of a clear European identity stretching to the political and diplomatic sphere. As Mitterrand's successor, he would resist U.S. ambitions to dominate the world completely.

But Mitterrand does not like Delors, personally or ideologically. It would require a considerable and unusual act of self-denial by Mitterrand to anoint Delors as his chosen successor, even though it would guarantee a Socialist occupancy in the Elysée into the 21st century.

The need for the French labor movement to win power in the workplace and in politics is now more pressing than ever. In that, and in the political split between the presidency and legislature—and the incredible extent to which contests are now fought through television—French political life more and more resembles that of the United States. Even so, the French share few of the current American views about what's best for the world.

**Denis MacShane's** book, *International Labour and the Origins of the Cold War*, which deals extensively with U.S. involvement in French union politics after 1945, will be published this summer by Oxford University Press.



## About face

Our needle has dipped back to the panic-stricken portrait of *ITT* editor James Weinstein. This week, our \$150,000 fund drive brought in only \$1,695. That's \$3,000 less than last week. Restore the smile. Please send a check to: 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647.

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By David Moberg

**F**OR SEVERAL YEARS, TEXAS BILLIONAIRE Henry Ross Perot has been sounding off in his barbecue-shop twang about the decline of the American economy and the failure of political leadership in Washington. So, when in late February cable TV host Larry King asked him why he didn't run for president and do something about it, Perot announced that he'd consider a draft. If volunteers put him on the ballot in all 50 states, he later said, he would run as an independent candidate for president this fall.

In this year of the frustrated, alienated voter, when none of the above is apparently the people's choice, Perot's offer unleashed a flood of calls—more than 1.3 million by last week—to his 800 telephone number in Dallas and a flurry of petition drives to get his name on the ballot. Last week two polls showed 16 to 21 percent of voters favoring Perot in a three-way race with George Bush and Bill Clinton. So inquiring minds want to know: Who is this guy and why do so many people want him to run for president?

Son of a Texarkana, Texas, cotton broker and Naval Academy graduate, the 61-year-old Perot was a hotshot salesman for IBM who chafed under corporate constraints. A Henry David Thoreau quotation he read in *Reader's Digest* changed his life, he said, and he quit IBM in 1962. With a couple friends and \$1,000, he started Electronic Data Systems (EDS) with the then-novel idea of selling computer services to companies. The passage of Medicare legislation in 1965 opened vast new opportunities for EDS to computerize medical billings, making Perot a billionaire by 1980.

**Go team:** Perot ran his business like a Marine commando operation: There was tight security, strict dress and conduct codes, and a stringently enforced expectation of total loyalty. But Perot also delegated responsibility, encouraged risk-taking, provided motivation through lucrative stock ownership bonuses, and fostered an intense team spirit. EDS guerrilla teams were flexible, ruthless competitors, and the company thrived in a new industry it had helped to create.

In one of the most incongruous marriages of disparate corporate cultures, ponderous General Motors bought entrepreneurial EDS for \$2.5 billion in 1984. Perot imagined he could both keep EDS autonomous and transform the biggest auto company into the best. But the heavy weight of GM bureaucracy stymied both hopes. When Perot, a GM director and the largest individual stockholder, openly and harshly criticized GM's purchase of Hughes Aircraft, its stultifying culture and its failure to build decent cars, Chairman Roger Smith paid Perot \$700 million for his stock to get him off the board and out of his face. After waiting the minimum time specified in the GM buyout, Perot started a new company, Perot Systems, and launched an attack on his once-loyal employees at EDS.

While Perot often was on the mark in his criticisms of GM, biographer Todd Mason made it clear he was driven by his own lust for power and wealth as much as by any desire to build GM. Yet Perot has skillfully crafted his media image, concealing his own ambitions and ruthlessness in the cloak of higher interests.

**Hard to pigeonhole:** This plain-spoken, tough little billionaire with an Alfred E. Neu-



## Perot gives different meaning to politics of 'business as usual'

man face became most widely known for his exploits outside of business: underwriting an attempted Christmas airlift to U.S. prisoners of war in North Vietnam in 1969 and sponsoring a commando raid to free two EDS employees from an Iranian prison in 1979. He attacked the Vietnam Veterans Memorial as inappropriate and encouraged beliefs that the Vietnamese were still holding prisoners of war.

Yet Perot also worked hard with Texas Democratic Gov. Mark White in the mid-'80s to push a controversial plan to raise taxes and academic standards for the state's public schools.

For all his tributes to American ideals, Perot often exhibits an insensitivity to civil liberties and democratic niceties. He fought against a police review board in Dallas. He also fostered anti-drug hysteria, calling for new wiretap powers for police, a system to rate judges according to the severity of drug sentencing and the cordoning off of black neighborhoods in Dallas for house-to-house searches for drugs by hundreds of police. His ideal city is Singapore—a booming center of capitalist entrepreneurialism operating under an extremely repressive government.

In recent years Perot has emerged as a sharp-tongued critic of the political and business establishment. Although he once ventured into Wall Street (and lost \$60 million trying to revive an ailing brokerage firm), Perot has emphatically denounced the '80s speculative binge of takeovers, junk bonds, overpaid investment bankers and business executives who've forgotten their mission to produce the best possible product—and protect jobs of Americans.

Perot is a fervent economic nationalist and an advocate of "strategic plans, industry by industry," adopting and improving on the kinds of industrial policies implemented by Japan's Ministry of International Trade and Industry. He argues that countries with a strategic alliance between government and business have a competitive edge over the U.S. in a tough world market.

Although "philosophically...for free trade," Perot condemns the amateurish, incompetent way recent administrations have negotiated international trade deals. He also calls for outlawing legislative lobbying by foreign governments and interests, and says Bush's

proposed free-trade agreement "will move the highest paid blue-collar jobs in the U.S. to Mexico." Rather than ship scrap steel and paper to Japan and import paper and cars, U.S. companies can—and should—make the products here, he believes.

Perot blames corporate leaders, not American workers, for the lack of U.S. competitiveness. He believes business executives should be "stewards" of the jobs their companies provide—jobs that are essential to the tax base and ultimately to the strength of the country. In Perot's view, businesses—as well as the country—have to pull together as teams in which every team member plays an essential role. But he has no use for unions. Early in EDS history he ardently fought and defeated a unionizing effort, and the open anti-unionism of EDS executives after the merger was too much even for GM bosses.

Although a self-styled superpatriot, Perot was a high-profile critic of Bush's Gulf War. Neither defending the emir nor protecting the flow of oil were worthy causes, he argued, and his lesson from Vietnam is that no war should be fought until there is national agreement. Because of his conservative ties, Perot surprises many people by favoring gun control and a woman's right to choose. He also makes a fervent pragmatist's plea for racial tolerance and cooperation: "We ought to get along with one another, because divided teams lose and united teams win."

In Perot's eccentric populist vision, America is an ill-run, extremely complex business. To change things around, the country should implement engineering principles and management ideas of people like quality-guru W. Edwards Deming. The main problem with our government is that the owners—"we, the people"—have failed to get control of our employees, our government representatives and officials, Perot says repeatedly. Although he regularly attacks the incompetence and privilege of government officials, he ultimately faults the general populace for not exercising their democratic power.

Despite his own inclinations to run government as a tough-minded, action-oriented boss, he says he wants to open up the democratic process—no political action committees, limited contributions and campaign periods, free TV for candidates, two-day elections over weekends. In his brave new

world of interactive television, voters would be informed of options, then through an "electronic town hall" tell their representatives what they want. Any new taxes would have to be approved by voter referendum.

**Prophet of doom:** True to his small-town, small-business roots and personal entrepreneurial history, Perot abhors debt. He's willing to raise taxes, especially on the rich, to reduce the deficit, but his fiscal policies are a jumble: Basically, he's anti-tax, but he also sees a need for government support of business, which would have to involve debt for productive public investment. He is, however, a partisan of privatizing traditional functions like road building.

Perot's warnings of impending economic doom as the U.S. slips into second-rate status obviously strike a chord—one plucked in different ways by Patrick Buchanan, Jerry Brown and other candidates this year. With two-thirds of voters wishing some other candidate would enter the race, Perot has a unique opportunity. Yet simply getting on each state's ballot will prove extremely difficult. Also, no third-party candidate in this century has gotten more than 16 percent of the vote. And no third-party candidate before has pledged to spend \$50 to \$100 million of his own money on his presidential campaign.

Perot's blunt speech—"talking 'American' rather than 'politician,'" as progressive populist Heather Booth says—and simple, hedgehog ideas make him a strong foil to either Bush or Clinton. Bush has no ideas, new or otherwise. Clinton, the master of policy nuance, suffers his "slick Willie" image, in part because he seems to lack the candor and forthrightness that Perot exhibits in a calculated way.

Although Democrats cheered Perot's potential entry as a blow to Bush, polls indicate that he may take as many or more voters away from Clinton if he is the Democratic nominee. Many of Perot's early supporters appear to be white-collar or small-business people, but he could easily appeal to "Reagan Democrats" and many independents. Perot, like Lee Iacocca, appeals to people who see a successful businessman as a no-nonsense leader who can get things done and manage the economy.

Like the Norman Rockwell paintings that decorate his office, Perot's populist ideology springs from the myths and realities of a bygone era of national purpose and unity. Unlike Reagan, who cultivated many of these same cultural roots, Perot sees government as the means of re-establishing some national coherence. This nationalism is a reaction against both the laissez-faire, free-market ideology of the past 12 years and the perverted internationalism of financial elites who acknowledge no responsibility for the welfare of American workers.

Perot's politics defy the usual labels. He is a "corporatist," attempting to override divisions in society and mold a team. Although there are grass-roots democratic elements in his vision, there is a strong bias toward business as the dominant element in defining the new community. It is unclear how he would strike the balance between individual liberties and community or what role organized workers, environmentalists and others would have in shaping Perot's new world.

Without a doubt, Perotism could pose a provocative challenge to American politics—left and right. □



By Joel Bleifuss

## Shoot the messenger

As the October Surprise drama continues to unfold, more hostages are being taken. This time the culprit is the U.S. Senate. Several Republican senators are holding up funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), the federal entity that provides financing for National Public Radio (NPR), the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) and a variety of national news programs—one of which had the temerity to investigate the October Surprise allegations.

On March 3, during debate over public broadcasting appropriations, Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC) voiced concern that although he believed "Big Bird is balanced—as much as I can see," there is a "serious left-wing bias at PBS." Helms is one of a small group of intractably conservative senators who are gunning for CPB. Curiously, their ringleader appears to be none other than Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole (R-KS), who is usually labeled a moderate. Here's how Dole explained why he was holding up CPB funding: "I have never been more turned off and more fed up with the increasing lack of balance, and the unrelenting liberal cheer-leading that I see and hear on the public airwaves."

Could it be that the object of Dole's ire is the documentary program *Frontline*, which on April 7 will broadcast a follow-up report on the October Surprise. Its first investigation, titled "An Election Held Hostage," aired April 16 of last year.

**Open fire:** *Frontline*, which is funded by the CPB, has in the past year suffered a barrage of criticism. Leading the charge are the neoconservatives David Horowitz and Peter Collier. Earlier this year the journal these two pundits edit, *COMINT*, set its sights on *Frontline*'s first October Surprise investigation. According to *COMINT*'s Peter Schweizer, this *Frontline* documentary was co-opted by House Democrats in the same way that Senate Democrats used National Public Radio's Nina Totenberg, another beneficiary of CPB money, to attack Clarence Thomas. Schweizer reports that "there is evidence that Democrats in the House may have used the PBS program *Frontline* ... to build public pressure for an investigation of the so-called 'October Surprise.'" His source for this allegation is an unnamed senior staff member in the office of Rep. Henry Hyde (R-IL).

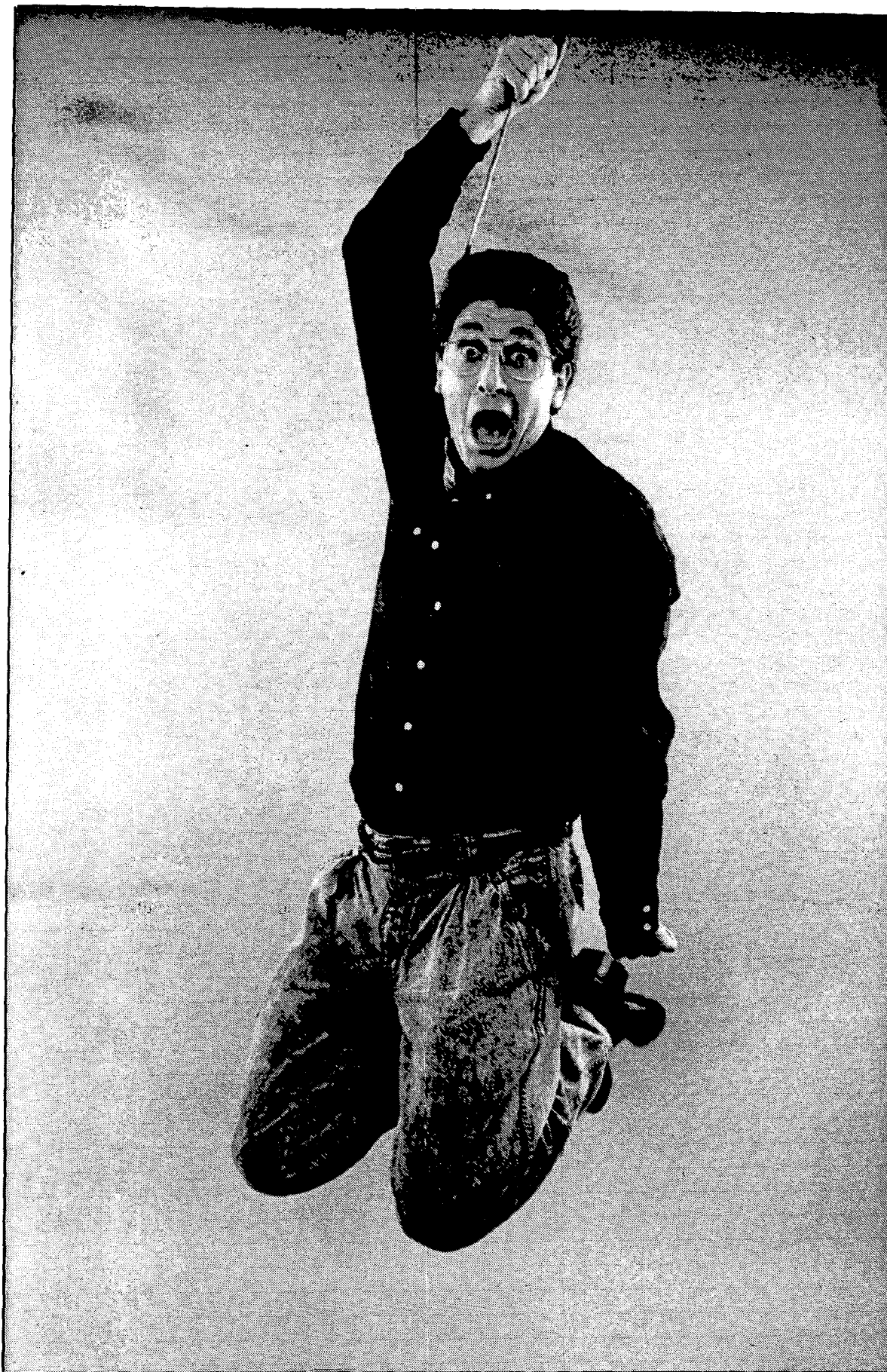
A more recent entrant into the CPB funding fray is self-described "researcher, author, consultant" Peggy Robohm, who collaborated with Frank Snepp in three controversial articles published in the *Village Voice* that attempted to debunk the October Surprise. Last month Robohm launched her crusade against *Frontline* by claiming that *Frontline* uses an on-camera interview with her in its April 7 program that she did not authorize. *Frontline* has denied the charge and will air portions of an interview it conducted with her last October.

Said *Frontline* reporter Robert Parry, "We treated her very fairly. The proof is in the April 7 *Frontline*."

Robohm has taken her dispute with *Frontline* to Capitol Hill, sending copies of her correspondence with the program's producers to those Senate and House members who are leading the effort to cut CPB's federal funding. In a March 23 letter to Martin Smith, senior producer of the April 7 *Frontline*, Robohm promised she would "take appropriate action" if *Frontline* aired her interview. And in a March 29 letter to Smith, she wrote, "The time has come for the viewers and congressional sponsors of PBS to know exactly where you stand. ... There is only one way for the 'issue' between us to be resolved: Fire Bob Parry and repudiate David Marks [who was hired to do research for *Frontline* and who Robohm claims misrepresented himself to her as a Senate investigator]."

This month *The New Republic* took up Robohm's cause in its April 20 "Notebook" section. It presented Robohm's accusations as if they were indisputable facts and concluded that "taxpayers should demand a refund." Steven Emerson, writing without a byline, explained that "readers of *The New Republic* will know why we're mystified by PBS' decision to air a second *Frontline* documentary (at a cost of \$300,000) further hyping the October Surprise conspiracy. We haven't seen the program yet—but it's produced by Robert Parry, who is more accurately described as an active proponent of the theory than an objective reporter."

Parry, who broke the 1984 story on the assassination manual the CIA had produced for the contras and who in 1985 was the first reporter to expose Oliver North's illegal efforts to fund the contras, responded to accusations of his lack of objectivity by telling *In These Times*, "As I have said 100 times, I am not a believer



Eric C. Hegge's

## Randall Terry: radio warrior

By Frederick Clarkson

Randall Terry, founder of the militant anti-abortion group, Operation Rescue, is pursuing a quintessentially American dream. He is leaving the front lines of the abortion battle to launch his own call-in talk show. On April 20, *Randall Terry Live* will begin beaming from radio stations across the nation, one hour a day, five days a week. Terry's career change, when examined along with his work with groups planning to impose Biblical law indicates that his leadership of the anti-abortion crusade involves much more than single-issue politics. But how his move from the anti-abortion front lines and onto a potentially explosive cultural war of purportedly Biblical proportions will affect his dourly militant public persona remains to be seen.

Terry's talk radio dream is not his first such quest. After dropping out of high school in 1976, he

hitchhiked to L.A. with the dream of becoming a rock'n'roll star. He got as far as Texas before returning home to Binghamton, N.Y., where he later became a used car salesman. In 1977 he found the Lord and, the following year, he enrolled at Elim Bible College in Lima, N.Y., where he met his wife Cindy Dean Terry. He graduated in 1981.

By 1983, he and his wife had conceived of what would later become Operation Rescue. Following a period of picketing in the Binghamton area, the first official Operation Rescue blockade of an abortion clinic took place in 1987 in New York City. Since then, Operation Rescue has become the most visible anti-abortion group in the country. Thousands of Operation Rescue members have been arrested obstructing or invading clinics, effectively deterring access to abortion for many women. Susan Faludi reports in *Mother Jones* that Terry is remembered



by an Elim classmate as a "fellow who lived a little too close to the edge, if you know what I mean." And anyone who has seen or heard Terry's zealous delivery in person or on television or radio knows exactly what he means.

**Flock radio:** His high profile activism and media savvy make his move to radio a natural. Terry is only the latest national figure—Jesse Jackson, John Sununu, and Planned Parenthood President Faye Wattleton—to cross over from "commentated on" to commentator.

Terry's role in Operation Rescue (OR) had become circumscribed. OR and Terry personally are under so many restraining orders from the federal courts that they were forced to play a legal shell game and reincorporate as National Operation Rescue. But Terry is still Terry and he had to choose between challenging judicial authority and doing hard time, or changing careers.

Terry is marketing his show to evangelical Christian radio programs. He plans to pull them out of the sanctuary and into politics, as he "educates the uninformed and motivates the uninvolved on every key issue of our day from a biblical perspective."

Seventy stations aired his pilot program, but only about 20 have lined up so far for the real thing. The pilot included interviews with right-wing Rep. Bill Dannemeyer (R-CA), and the pro-choice Barbara Reynolds, editorial page editor of *USA Today*. Listeners should not expect a diverse guest list. "We need to platform our heroes," says Terry, "to give exposure to our warriors."

According to the show's "Vision Statement," Christian radio has "been content to preach to the converted, often with mediocre non-confrontational, unchallenging programming." Notable exceptions, according to Terry, are James Dobson's *Focus on the Family*, and the Dallas-based USA Radio Network headed by Marlin Maddoux.

For a role model, Terry looks to Rush Limbaugh's far-right radio persona. "Some of Rush's most ardent listeners are Christians," claims Terry in his Vision Statement. "That means that Christians are turning their radios to Rush instead of religious programming." But Limbaugh's program is too secular for Terry. "We want to be distinctively Biblical in our solutions."

He wants to go beyond Limbaugh in one other crucial respect. *Randall Terry Live* will be more like a political seminar from the Christian right than a talk show. Using the whole Bible, Terry wants to "help train and raise up a new generation of reformers." As the Vision Statement puts it: "We do not just want a parent angry about Planned Parenthood's sex-ed program in the public school. We want to train him or her to effectively lobby the school board—or better yet—to be elected or appointed to the school board in order to kick Planned Parenthood out." The fundamentalist school boards Terry plans to help elect would ensure a Christian public education. But, for now he advises would-be theocrats to either home-school their children or send them to Christian institutions.

**The whole Bible, and nothing but:** This view flows naturally from Terry's involvement with the Coalition on Revival (COR), a secretive, theocratic movement, headquartered in Sunnyvale, Calif. COR has a long-range plan to "Christianize" America. Terry is a founding writer of COR's *Crosswinds*, a quarterly journal that COR chief Jay Grimstead describes as a "networking tool" for "that hearty group of Christian leaders who are capable of dying for Christ and are eager to help fellow warriors who live and fight their battles in holiness and in serious obedience to the Bible." COR plans to rally right-wing Christians for a holy war against the "forces of darkness" and *Crosswinds* will, as Grimstead writes, provide a "comprehensive helicopter view of the entire battlefield."

In a *Crosswinds* article titled "Biblical Family," Terry argues that birth control is "anti-child." He writes, "If you are using any kind of birth control: stop. Leave the number of children you have in God's hands." The Terry's have four children, three of them foster kids.

*Crosswinds* writers must agree with the COR doctrine and adhere to an editorial litmus test that includes the declaration: "We deny that anyone, Jew or Gentile, believer or unbeliever, private person or public official is exempt from the moral and juridical obligation before God to submit to Christ's Lordship over every aspect of his life in thought, word and deed."

In addition to being a Christian polemicist, Terry also serves as president of the Christian Defense Coalition of Washington, D.C. According to its literature, one of the group's purposes is to defend Christians against "police brutality and judicial tyranny." The Christian Defense Coalition functions as a support network for OR activists in their confrontations with the judicial system. The group's headquarters is housed in the Free Congress Foundation, a multifaceted hub of conservative political thought and action, headed by right-wing strategist Paul Weyrich.

**Taking power:** The Christian Defense Coalition recently established the Joshua Project, which, according to its brochure, plans to help righteous Christians take control of American culture and the country's leading cultural institutions. Terry and friends refer to these institutions as "power bases"—the arts, the media, social services, education, government, and "the Church." At the moment, Project officials believe, most of these institutions are under the sway of Satan. "If America is to survive," says a Joshua Project brochure, "she must be rebuilt on the foundation of the laws and principles found in the Word of God."

By the word of God, Terry and his colleagues most likely are referring to a far-right-wing interpretation of the laws of the Old Testament. The most likely contemporary application of those laws would mean legal sanctions not only against abortion but homosexuality, sex outside marriage, blasphemy, heresy and non-Christian religions. As COR literature explains it, God's law also requires that believers be "willing to submit to the hierarchical order that God has created in which we are willing to submit as [we submit] to Christ, to employers, civil government and church leaders, and within families, wives to their husbands and children to their parents."

Nonetheless, nouveau radio personality Terry promises his prospective subscribers that his show will be profitable. Terry is open for business, or as he explains, "available for station liners and select market exclusive product endorsements." Further, he claims that local media outlets will "mention the name of your station as the local tie-in" during their ongoing coverage of Terry's activities by the major networks and wire services.

Lest anyone think him a zealot, Terry says his show will also include "political and religious satire" complete with "running gags, comical characters, and bits." With or without comedy, however, controversy promises to remain the name of the game.

Terry argues that his aggressive brand of politics generates ink and video that is not only good business but essential for Christianity. "Controversy follows Randall Terry, and listeners follow controversy," he says in the *Randall Terry Live* brochure. "That may sound alarming to some, but remember, the Lord Jesus Christ was controversial. And the early disciples were certainly controversial." But then, they weren't Randall Terry. □

Frederick Clarkson writes a column on politics and religion for *The Freedom Writer*, Box 589, Great Barrington, MA 01230.

in the October Surprise conspiracy. I am a reporter who was hired by *Frontline* to examine these longstanding allegations. I think anyone who watches this program will see that it is an extremely balanced, fair production. Emerson has repeatedly tried to misrepresent my position on aspects of this story."

**Graymail?** In the House, Rep. Robert Livingston (R-LA) also has come to Robohm's defense. In a March 26 letter to PBS President Bruce Christensen, Livingston wrote, "I am concerned about the activities of the PBS program *Frontline* in reporting the October Surprise conspiracy. ... I understand that PBS maintains journalistic standards. ... The activities of journalistic reporters appear to violate these standards. ... Discretion on the part of PBS programmers will deter efforts in Congress to reduce federal funding for public broadcasting. However, continued biased reporting will only foster opposition to PBS funding."

Livingston is currently co-sponsoring a bill introduced in February by Rep. Dick Armey (R-TX) that would end all federal subsidies to CPB, NPR, PBS and *Frontline*.

**Casey: Could he? Would he?:** *Frontline's* congressional detractors have something to fear. The new *Frontline*, titled "Investigating the October Surprise," breaks ground by examining what it calls "a few of the key questions Congress is now confronting." One looming question *Frontline* probes is the whereabouts of Reagan-Bush Campaign Manager William Casey.

Iranian born arms dealer Jamshid Hashemi has alleged that he and his brother Cyrus, who is now dead, attended meetings in Madrid on two consecutive days in late July 1980 with Casey and an Iranian cleric, Mehdi Karrubi. According to Jamshid Hashemi, it was at these meetings that the arms-for-hostages deal was first negotiated. In an interview with *Frontline*, Karrubi, who is now speaker of the Iranian parliament, denies Hashemi's allegation, telling *Frontline*, "I want to say that they are pure lies."

But hotel records place the Hashemis in Madrid in late July. As for Casey's whereabouts, they remain a mystery on the two days in question—July 27 and 28, 1980.

*The New Republic's* Steven Emerson and *Newsweek's* John Berry contend in their articles on the October Surprise published last year that Casey was at a conference in London on the morning of July 28, 1980, and therefore could not have attended a two-day Madrid meeting. In fact, both reporters based much of their argument that the October Surprise is a hoax on the assumption that it was impossible for Casey to have gone to Madrid as Jamshid Hashemi claimed.

But the new *Frontline* presents a strong case that Casey could have been in Madrid on the morning of July 28, 1980. UCLA History Professor Robert Dallek tells *Frontline*: "I have a very strong memory of not seeing Mr. Casey at the conference that morning, because I was giving my talk at 11:30 in the morning and I looked for him in the room. ... I knew he was a prominent figure. And I was interested to know whether he was going to be there or not."

In fact, weighing the evidence provided by documents and witnesses, *Frontline* concludes that it is impossible to say where Casey was during the three and a half days spanning Friday, July 25, and Monday morning, July 28, 1980.

**Unanswered questions:** "Investigating the October Surprise" ends with the suggestion that a thorough congressional investigation into the allegations "could shed light on two later historical developments." The first one is early shipments of U.S. arms to Iran. *Frontline* observes, "After Ronald Reagan's inauguration, the U.S. government did secretly authorize Israel to ship U.S. weapons to Iran. ... [T]hat secret approval was never explained. Who gave the O.K. and why?"

The second development concerns the Iran-contra arms-for-hostages deal. *Frontline* notes, "When a new hostage crisis struck in 1984, many of the same band of arms dealers, financiers and intelligence operatives were together again. John Shaheen [a close friend of Casey], Roy Furmark [another Casey associate], William Casey and Cyrus Hashemi all joined forces in a scheme to win freedom for American hostages in Lebanon. Cyrus Hashemi brought to the first negotiating session an Iranian named Hassan Karrubi, Mehdi Karrubi's brother."

*Frontline* goes on to observe, "The complexity and ugliness of the October Surprise charges make it understandable why many politicians, journalists and citizens simply want to dismiss the possibility of a hostage deal altogether."

Understandable, maybe. But not excusable. "Investigating the October Surprise" bends over backward to be fair. And these days, while many in the mainstream media are bent over forward in their efforts to disprove the October Surprise, *Frontline* is to be commended for its integrity.



By Jim McNeill

## Down home in Dioxinville

Two weeks ago, the smoke from a few marijuana cigarettes seemed as if it would suffocate the presidential campaign of Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton. Although the cannabis cloud seems to have lifted, a fire burning back home in Arkansas is posing yet another public relations hazard for the candidate's media handlers. People United Against the Burn (PUAB), a citizens group in dioxin-contaminated Jacksonville, Ark., has filed formal charges of child neglect against Clinton for permitting the continued contamination of the city's children.

PUAB also filed charges against Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) head William Reilly, who has allowed local EPA officials to go ahead with plans to incinerate tons of dioxin-laden wastes in Jacksonville. The wastes were left over by a manufacturer of Agent Orange and other chemicals.

In *These Times* first reported on Jacksonville's dioxin contamination in a three-part series published in March 1988. Environmental reporter Dick Russell noted then that Clinton was "a staunch advocate of incineration of the dioxin wastes." Clinton approved incineration—despite the fact that local voters had voted 2-to-1 against it in an earlier referendum.

## Deadly weapons?

It was a historic night for horror films at last week's Academy Awards—and we're not talking about *Silence of the Lambs*. Debra Chasnoff's terrifying look at the General Electric Company's environmental record, *Deadly Deception*, won the Oscar for Best Documentary Short Subject.

Our own ever-prescient Pat Aufderheide, not previously known for traveling in Academy circles, plugged the movie in these pages just two weeks ago. Aufderheide said the film, which is now on a 50-city tour of the U.S., "is at least as fascinating in its focus on GE's image massaging through ads as it is wrenching in its analysis of GE's savage irresponsibility."

Chasnoff's film was produced by INFAC, the corporate accountability group that has led a six-year-old boycott against GE for its role in producing nuclear weapons. While accepting her Oscar, Chasnoff thanked INFAC and its "supporters all over the world [who] helped us tell the real story about the company that falsely claims it 'brings good things to life.'"

In its Oscar roundup the next day, the *New York Times* noted Chasnoff's victory, but mistakenly called her film *Deadly Weapons*. The nation's newspaper of record said the movie exposed "the environmental threat posed by nuclear weapons," but omitted any mention of GE.

## Hack(er)s at the EPA

A strange story emerging from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) could change the nation's notion of computer hackers. Soon, Americans may forget the image of hackers as pre-teen prodigies, who covertly penetrate government mainframes just for fun. Instead they'll see the corporate logos of companies like Computer Sciences Corp. (CSC), a \$1.7 billion "systems integrator" that has allegedly used its contract with the EPA to fraudulently profit from and gain control over the agency.

According to the trade journal *Information Week*, CSC has garnered so much EPA business—1,452 CSC employees are working on EPA contracts—that the firm "practically run[s] the agency." Last month, EPA Inspector General John Martin told a house subcommittee, "There is little information at the EPA that CSC does not have access to, including its most sensitive data." Martin also told outraged members of the House subcommittee on oversight and investigations that the computer firm, based in El Segundo, Calif., may have used its privileged position to overcharge the agency tens of millions of dollars in its \$347 million contract with the EPA in 1990.

EPA officials accepted CSC's 1990 bid even though it was \$52 million higher than the next highest competitor's. According to *Information Week*, "the deal proceeded despite concerns over CSC practices that had been previously raised within the EPA and other agencies." In March 1990, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration canceled a contract with CSC after uncovering questionable business practices and potential fraud. Rep. John Dingell (D-MI), chairman of the subcommittee, said "This situation is shameful, embarrassing and the worst example of government contracting I have ever seen."

CSC's manager of investor relations, Bill Lackey, told *Information Week* that any irregularities reported in its dealings with the agency were due to the EPA's flawed administrative practices. He also said he did not believe that the accusations would affect potential contracts.

# INSHORT

## The sad shape of human rights in India

Amnesty International's latest report on human-rights violations in India has engendered a predictable low-key response from the U.S. administration. Entitled "India: Torture, Rape and Death in Custody," the report released last month lists 415 cases of deaths in custody since 1985—much to the continued discomfort of New Delhi, which is trying to step up trade and defense relations with Washington.

The U.S. State Department reiterates its position that the issue remains on its agenda during its continuing dialogue with the Indian government; that it has included such abuses in its annual reports over the years; and that India, with its purportedly democratic structure, can bring about change. But there is an implicit—and sometimes explicitly stated—"understanding" in the administration of the so-called constraints of a developing country.

But the report has yet to draw a response from the U.S. Congress, where, in the past, Amnesty International and Asia Watch have had considerable impact. The pressure the U.S. government can usually exert when it cares to in other cases is less possible in the Indian context because U.S. aid to India is marginal. So a few traditional India-bashers such as Rep. Wally Herger (R-CA) from Yuba City with its 15,000-strong Sikh constituency that demands a separate homeland for Sikhs in India and contributes generously to Herger's campaign chests—and die-hard Cold Warriors such as Reps.

Dan Burton (R-IN) and Robert Lagomarsino (R-CA) try every year over the last three years to have India's most-favored-nation trade status conditional on its human-rights record.

On the other side, Indiaphiles like former Ambassador to New Delhi Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY), Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Rep. Stephen Solarz (D-NY), who has received large contributions from the affluent Indian-American community—neutralize the effects of the reports mainly by speaking to wider issues of the democratic and electoral politics of India.

These, however, are not the issues affecting people like S. Joel, who died while being detained at the Assam Rifles Headquarters in Somsai in Manipur state. Amnesty International reports the circumstances of death: "Died in custody of Assam Rifles," allegedly "shot while trying to escape." Amnesty International also reports that Joel's "family doubts this because he could hardly walk when brought home during interrogation."

Nor do they seem related to Kamla Bai (female), reportedly illegally detained on suspicion of theft and tortured under interrogation, died in Padwara police station in Madhya Pradesh, a case investigated by the Peoples Union for Civil Liberties, which attributed the death to beating by police (a sub-inspector was suspended). In only three of the more than 400 cases of deaths in custody were any police officers convicted.

Most Indian and international civil-rights groups say the Amnesty International report only tells part of the story, because so many cases of torture and abuse go unreported. Of

the reported cases, the victims, including children and pregnant women, nearly all come from India's poor and underprivileged in every state.

For too long India has hidden behind the cloak of democracy to perpetuate gross human-rights violations. Not only is there an inherent violence born out of the country's caste and class structure, but, since independence in 1947, the center has used police, paramilitary forces and the army to quell legitimate protest as well as the struggles of nationalities and other minorities.

Nonetheless, India has one of the most dynamic civil and democratic rights movements in the world. It gained momentum in the mid-'70s when the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi clamped a national "emergency" on the country, fearing a mass uprising in the face of her rising unpopularity. Rights groups in India have consistently focused on state violence and initiated a spate of court cases on these issues.

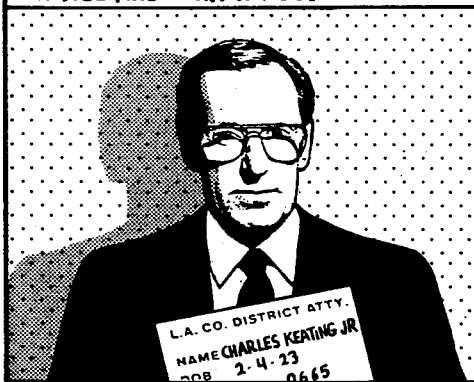
How far the Amnesty International report legitimizes the work of these local-rights organizations and pressures the government into compliance is a matter of dispute. Both Amnesty International and Asia Watch have brought out several reports on violations in India, particularly following the rising tension and conflict in the states of Kashmir and Punjab over the last five years. But they have fought a losing battle for permission to enter the area on fact-finding missions.

Ironically, the Indian government has used the very democratic rights movement it has tried to crush as justification for denying international or foreign rights organizations entry.

—A. Namika

## THIS MODERN WORLD by TOM TOMORROW

DEREGULATION WORKED SO WELL FOR THE SAVINGS AND LOAN INDUSTRY--



--THAT THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION, AT THE URGING OF DAN QUAYLE'S COMPETITIVENESS COUNCIL, HAS NOW DECIDED TO EASE REGULATION ON AN EMERGING NEW INDUSTRY--



--AND THE AIRLINES--



--BIOTECHNOLOGY--

...ABOUT RELEASING A FEW HARMLESS GENETICALLY ALTERED ORGANISMS INTO THE ENVIRONMENT!



TOM TOMORROW



## States of denial: Eastern Europe struggles with historical amnesia

By Paul Hockenos

BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

**M**ILAN KUNDERA OPENS *THE BOOK OF Laughter and Forgetting* with a parable about the treatment of history under communism. On a snowy winter's day in 1948, Czech Communist leader Klement Gottwald posed for a photo with his inner circle. Next to him stood comrade Clementis, who took off his fur cap and set it on Gottwald's bare head. After the purges four years later, however, Clementis was air-brushed out of the photo. All that remained of him was his cap on Gottwald's head.

When the revolutions of 1989 brought down the East bloc dictatorships, they swept away the facade of historical half-truths, distortions and lies upon which the ruling elites grounded their legitimacy. If the struggle of people against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting, as Kundera puts it, then in 1989 memory was victorious.

The close of a discredited historical epoch, however, poses new questions about remembrance and forgetting, about the new relationship between people and power. In a region so steeped in historical tragedy as Eastern and Central Europe, the form of democracy that evolves is implicitly informed by the post-communist systems' relation to their pasts.

In word, at least, all of Europe's new member-states concur that the dissolution of single-party rule constitutes a clean break with the communist era. But like the will to erase a bad dream, the East Europeans have tried to put the last four decades behind them as if they had never existed. To the detriment of their societies, the people of the former East bloc have concentrated their collective energy on forgetting.

**Looking the other way:** Of the many aspects of political transition, the Central and East Europeans have taken little pain to confront Stalinism's legacy in their countries. Previously suppressed knowledge about the political gulags and the secret police's Gestapo tactics have underlined the totalitarian essences of even the "soft" communist regimes. Yet that examination has stopped drastically short of a searching investigation into the past. As quickly as Romanian revolutionaries changed Lenin Strada to Strada Demokratiei, the complex questions of responsibility and guilt have been brushed aside to clear the way for the new era. The necessity of a penetrating *Aufarbeitung der Geschichte*—a coming to terms with the past—is nowhere on the young democracies' agendas.

Immediately after the East bloc regimes tumbled, even the top *nomenklatura* professed that they had been closet democrats all along, pushing relentlessly for change from within the power structures. For the discontented populations, the fact that the state outlawed political opposition and ruthlessly crushed popular uprisings served as a handy and not altogether unconvincing alibi for their political conformism. Unless one was prepared to sacrifice a normal life, communism pressed

the citizen into active compliance with the system. As party member, low-level bureaucrat or obedient fellow-traveler, the average person struck his or her compromise with power. In former East Germany today, weekly revelations about the cooperation of even leading figures in the pre-1989 underground opposition with the secret police has exposed the shocking totality of society's complicity. In hindsight, the Vaclav Havel and the Adam Michniks stand out as the precious few.

Broad collaboration with the powers that were explains the readiness to skip over a full coming to accounts with the past. With the single exception of former East Germany, the calls of yesterday's dissidents to open the secret police files have run into brick walls—and not to most people's displeasure. Nor is it simply a matter of politics that most of the democratic dissident-led parties fared poorly at the polls. The majority of people not only identify better with the careerist-turned-nationalist but also find their conscience better protected there.

Uncomfortable conscience demands that somebody from the very top be indicted for the system as a whole. The trials of Bulgaria's former dictator or a handful of Nicolae Ceausescu's secret police serve as scapegoat and put the issue to rest. Perhaps the pinnacle of absurdity is the Federal Republic's demand that former German Democratic Republic (GDR) President Erich Honecker be retrieved from his deathbed—at the moment, in the Chilean Embassy in Moscow—to face trial for the state's shoot-to-kill order along the former German-German border. If Honecker were convicted, the majority would implicitly be absolved from responsibility for dutifully casting their single-party ballots every year in the GDR's showcase elections.

Czechoslovakia's far-reaching new law that bans all members of the "old structures" from public office for five years portends to solve the problem of the past with a simple administrative stroke of the pen. The blanket "collective guilt" of the *nomenklatura*—including reform-minded Prague Spring communists such as Alexander Dubcek—effectively translates into society's "collective innocence."

**In search of straw men:** The release of the individual from accountability lays a precarious basis for a new democratic political culture. Most importantly, it fails to replace the individual's consciously hypocritical acquiescence to state power with an active ethic of civic responsibility or political obligation. Despite the introduction of multiparty electoral democracy, the implication persists that the system and its ruling elite alone shoulder the burden of social accountability. In Hungary, for example, the Germans are to blame for the Hungarian Holocaust, the "Russians" for Soviet communism and now, in some circles, the Jews for the failures of capitalism. Turn-outs for local elections in Hungary have dropped from 40 percent to 20 percent and, in some recent votes, down below 15 percent. There are more than a few

Hungarians who would happily revert to the good old days of Kadarism, when Hungarian President Janos Kadar (1956-88) offered Hungarians the "cheeriest barracks" in Eastern Europe—one with a relatively high standard of living—in return for political passivity.

The illusion of an automatic *tabula rasa* also undermines the need for society to reflect upon the consciousness that evolved under the conditions of the past 40 years. Since communism and "socialism" have been forever assigned to history's dustbin, there appears no pressing need for society to come to terms with just what that system was or how it continues to manifest itself in the present. In depoliticized societies, the totalitarian thought of the old fuels today's chauvinisms. A familiar authoritarianism, intolerance and provincialism persist in the reigning power structures—although now under the name of nationalism, "communism's opposite." And, by definitively closing the book on the past, the language of socialism also remains trapped in Stalinism's wreckage. Thus, the possibility of social democracy is also neatly nipped at the bud.

The denial of the communist era has led political forces in Central and Eastern Europe in two general directions. In liberal democratic circles, those most strongly identified with the dissident tradition, the 1989 revolutions are seen as the chance to

### The close of a discredited historical epoch poses new questions about remembrance and forgetting, about the new relationship between people and power.

embark upon a qualitatively new political future. Their model is contemporary Western democracy, something that most of them admit has never existed in Eastern Europe. The second and stronger tendency is a conservative nationalism that views the communist era as a Soviet-imposed interruption of a national democratic tradition that had flourished prior to World War II. The nationalists tout "a return to the past," a reversion to the interwar period when Hungarians ruled Hungary and Poles ruled Poland.

**Fairy tales revisited:** Unfortunately, today's elected rulers have sought recourse in historical myths no less perilous than those of their communist predecessors. The nationalist revivals throughout the region have prompted sweeping historical revisions that uncritically glorify the nation's past from the Middle Ages to the present. Amid a new vacuum of power and ideology, the embellished histories remain one of the few legitimations of the post-communist governments. With economic collapse and political instability

looming, many liberals, too, have stooped to tap that national sentiment. The deficit of alternative political ideas has presented conservatives with an open field to define the nascent political culture.

The contention that the national culture stands firmly in the tradition of modern democracy enables political conservatives to anchor their own undemocratic ideologies in whitewashed national precedent. As the much-maligned object of communist propaganda, the fairy tales of lost national glory are easily marketed. In Poland, the interwar Second Republic and its strong-arm leader, Marshal Jozef Pilsudski, is today held up as a model of Polish democracy. In fact, Pilsudski came to power in a bloody coup in 1926 and presided over gross human-rights violations, the brutal crushing of strikes and

## POLITICS

virtual civil war with the national minorities.

Hungary's conservative ruling coalition, led by the Hungarian Democratic Forum (HDF), harkens back to the populist political culture of the country's Christian Course during the '20s and '30s. Picking up where that era left off has spelled the restoration of the power of the Catholic Church and the unabashed exaltation of Hungarianism. The weak interwar democracy serves today as the model for an authoritarian rule in which parliamentary opposition and public criticism are resentfully tolerated at best. Complete with the ugly chauvinisms of a bygone age, it is a historical brand of political conservatism considerably less sophisticated than its modern counterparts in Western Europe.

After the humiliation of communism, the positive appraisal of the interwar years soothes many a bruised pride. First, it absolves the nation from the reality of its often ignominious prewar and wartime past. It also bolsters the logic that "we, the nation" were always democrats, and communism an inflicted aberration. Under the supra-collective cloak of the nation, the individual is relieved of responsibility for his or her actions—and inaction.

Any criticism of the popular revisionism therefore strikes a sensitive nerve, ensuring that real debate over domestic nationalism doesn't enter political discourse. Anti-Semitism, for example, is alive and well in Hungary. In the government-friendly media, HDF populists continue to manipulate the anti-Semitism that proved so damaging to the intellectual-led Free Democratic Party in the 1990 election. Yet in Hungary, anti-Semitism itself is not discussed in terms of posing an impediment to democracy. Rather, it is the very fact that criticism of the government's anti-Semitic posturing finds its way into public discussion that supposedly jeopardizes the country's "return to Europe." The government coalition supporters brand critics "un-Hungarian" or "unpatriotic" for libeling "the nation" (of which they consider themselves the sole representative) and discrediting Hungary in the international community's eyes. This *modus vivendi* enables the regime to continue to stir anti-Semitic feelings with impunity.

**Cries and whispers:** Elsewhere, leaderships and oppositions alike have bound their fragile democracies to heritages with even darker pasts. In Romania, the rehabilitation

Continued on page 10





Tom Billings

## Ethics and safety suffer meltdown at Texas nuclear power plant

By Michael Paterniti

**I**N 1984, DOBY HATLEY FOUND HERSELF IN A 10-gallon hat full of trouble. Working as a supervisor at Comanche Peak nuclear power plant in north central Texas, she was pressured by her bosses to falsify blueprints and specs so the plant would pass inspection by the government's Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). Logic ran that the sooner Comanche Peak passed inspection, the sooner it could go on-line, and the sooner its owner, Texas Utilities (TU), could charge rate payers for escalating construction costs.

When Hatley decided to tell the NRC about the falsified documents, all hell broke loose.

"We had pre-notification that the NRC would come—how that information came to us I don't know—but we would change [construction] documents to match what we had in the field," says Hatley. "After going to the NRC, I was fired; there were threats against my life inside and outside the plant. They

blew up my car twice and lit my house on fire. I went into hiding for two years."

Six years later, in 1990, Hatley's son, Thayron, a supervisor at Comanche Peak, raised complaints that the fire watch logs, those meant to ensure that the fire safety system is inspected daily, had been falsified. Internal TU memos obtained by *In These*

### ENERGY

*Times* corroborate that nearly 50 percent of the logs were indeed falsified. In response, the NRC levied a \$50,000 fine against TU. Still, the second generation Hatley, who was tagged in previous evaluations as a constant asset, was cited for insubordination, reprimanded, demoted and now works as a school janitor.

Besides the Hatleys, other whistle-blowers have fled to Canada or Colorado, sought shelter in convents and hotel rooms, have been threatened—some nearly murdered. One, other whistle-blowers claim, has been

murdered, though the coroner doesn't agree. According to Comanche Peak workers and public-interest groups, harassment and intimidation at the facility are still as common as ribs at a Texas barbecue.

**Something to hide?** What does Comanche Peak have to hide by shutting these people up? After 18 years of construction, the power plant in Glen Rose, Texas, is still not fully completed, strapped with more than \$10 billion in cost overruns—a third of which rate payers are forced to absorb. Indeed, trying to determine why Comanche Peak more resembles a never-ending science experiment than a nuclear power plant leads to a laundry list of improprieties compiled by government agencies, whistle-blowers, public-interest groups and the media. These include:

- charges of collusion between the NRC and TU;

- documented cash settlements paid by TU to former employees, apparently meant to silence whistle-blowers and public-interest groups. The NRC originally condoned these

settlements, then reversed its position after a Senate subcommittee rebuked the agency in 1989;

- workers repeatedly exposed to toxins, radiation and intimidation in the workplace;

- a list of thousands of non-conforming violations cited over 18 years, as well as hundreds of thousands of dollars in fines levied by the NRC.

"TU is building a bomb that will blow up," warns Micky Dow, one of the most vocal opponents of the plant. Dow is a legal representative who has filed a bevy of pending suits against the NRC, TU and a score of individuals involved in public interest groups in Texas, all of whom he charges have been "bought" by TU. Dow, himself, even sought asylum in Canada because of continued threats on his life.

And although some say Dow is prone to exaggeration, many agree with his assessment of Comanche Peak.

Hatley certainly does. "Comanche Peak is a story about people who have control and don't have any regard for the environment, human life or the United States," she says. "If the plant had an accident, it would be worse than what we saw at Chernobyl."

And at the National Whistleblower Center, attorney Steve Kohn, who represents several ex-employees at the plant, calls Comanche Peak "a scandal of immense proportion, a



monster just coming into the light."

In response, TU senior engineer Dave Fiorelli says, "We clearly agree the cost is higher than we planned, but we disagree with the safety allegations. Comanche Peak is one of the most reviewed and inspected reactors in the world. We have a commitment to protecting the environment and a great record of living up to that commitment."

Fiorelli cites a group achievement award from the Wildlife Society and an Outstanding Water Conservationist of the Year award from the Texas Water Conservation Association as evidence of that commitment.

When construction began in 1974, TU predicted the plant would be on-line to the Dallas-Fort Worth area in 1980 at a cost of \$779 million. Almost \$11 billion and 16 years later—April 3, 1990, to be exact—the nuclear power reactor became the 114th in the country to find itself in fission. Its first seven months were less than auspicious, however, as the plant shut down on four separate occasions for repair work.

And despite an onslaught of lawsuits and continued media coverage, Comanche Peak remains on-line today. A litany of concerns, as articulated by whistle-blowers and public-interest groups, have focused on:

- quality control at the plant;
- electrical wiring, specifically wiring with separation problems, which causes cables to short out or melt;
- the viability of the reactor shield;
- the fire safety system;
- pipe supports meant to hold up the thousands of feet of piping responsible for conveying both radioactive water and coolant to and from the core (an accident, in this case, might lead most quickly to melt-down);
- the chronic falsification of documents to pass NRC inspections.

In response to some but not all of these charges, TU has redesigned Comanche Peak, reportedly adding more safety-related modifications than any other nuclear power plant in the country. This, in turn, has led to skyrocketing cost overruns and an alleged campaign of harassment meant to silence whistle-blowers and expedite the building process when changes appear too costly or time-consuming.

"There has been a small amount of harassment and intimidation, but we don't believe it's a pattern," says TU's Fiorelli. "Opponents have raised these concerns with the NRC, and the NRC ruled it was not a pattern."

**Working for the clampdown:** Meanwhile, Dow and the whistle-blowers he represents claim TU has always done business in a brawling, totalitarian way.

In December 1981, when TU first entered into licensing hearings before the NRC to obtain an operating permit (and, in turn, pass their building costs on to local rate payers), several groups intervened on the public's behalf, voicing safety concerns about the plant. The Citizens Association for Sound Energy (CASE) was one of those groups and quickly gained a reputation for stubbornly taking on the TU brass while winning substantive safety modifications. As CASE gained clout, a number of whistle-blowers allied themselves with the group. Meanwhile, TU found itself paying dearly in time and money to accommodate the various demands.

By 1988, however, CASE, led by President Juanita Ellis, suddenly did an about-face and virtually placed itself on TU's bankroll. Ellis signed what now has become an infamous \$12 million settlement construed by her most vociferous critics as "a money-for-silence"

deal. According to the National Whistleblower Center, CASE reportedly received \$4.5 million in a lump sum from TU, then another \$500,000 in consulting fees plus an undisclosed amount in a fund controlled by TU and CASE that ostensibly bought the silence of one group of whistle-blowers. Ellis allegedly received about \$250,000 in salary while TU offered another \$500,000 to CASE for staff expenses. Also, according to the National Whistleblower Center, TU gave \$5.5 million to CASE to compensate TU employees

## Trying to determine why Comanche Peak in north central Texas more resembles a never-ending science experiment than a nuclear power plant leads to a laundry list of improprieties compiled by government agencies, whistle-blowers, public-interest groups and the media.

who complained of everything from sexual harassment to wrongful termination.

The TU-CASE settlement contained a peculiar clause stating that TU would pay for up to \$4.5 million in legal expenses should CASE be taken to court. It also contained another clause allowing CASE officials to continue monitoring the plant. Meanwhile, Hatley, a whistle-blower who received money in the settlement, claims that, of the \$5.5 million earmarked for the workers, one-third was immediately taken by public-interest lawyers working for CASE, the Government Accountability Project (GAP) and Trial Lawyers for Public Justice (TLPJ).

When questioned recently about the agreement, Ellis called the figures, as stated above, "a lie." In a document filed with the NRC last December, Ellis claimed that "CASE

never received or had control of \$10 million" and said the insinuations were the "result from a misinterpretation of the computer printout" supplied to ex-CASE members Barbara and David Boltz.

But a tax return filed by CASE in 1988 and obtained by *In These Times* shows Ellis collected \$190,550 in personal income, while reported income for the group totaled more than \$4 million. In 1989, CASE's reported income reached nearly \$3.4 million. Prior to 1988, CASE had an income of roughly \$20,000 a year, with Ellis deferring her salary until the group raised more money.

**An appearance problem:** While such settlements are not illegal, many say they are unethical. Advocates including Ralph Nader argue that public-interest groups take this kind of "hush money" too often, jeopardizing their voice in the nuclear power industry.

The National Whistleblowers Center claims that the settlements are also a function of greed, that because lawyers working with these public-interest groups stand to make a lot of money, they may encourage such arrangements. Meanwhile, according to attorney Kohn, at Comanche Peak the NRC sanctioned "hush money" by allowing settlement deals.

What several members sitting on the 1989 Senate Subcommittee on Nuclear Regulation, most notably Alan Simpson (R-WY) and John Breaux (D-LA), found disturbing in the case of Comanche Peak was the impression left by TU's various settlement agreements and the NRC's acceptance of those agreements. It appeared, whether or not it was always true, that money could buy a whistle-blower's or public-interest group's silence, and, as it did, the government would sit by and let it happen.

Add to that a House subcommittee news release from 1986 that charged the NRC's Region IV with pressuring their own inspectors "to downgrade negative findings about Comanche Peak," and sometimes file inaccurate inspection reports. This has led to allegations of collusion between TU and the NRC.

Despite the negative response to the settlement agreement, some inside the NRC stand firm. "Agreements of this nature do not jeopardize the safety of reactors in our country," says NRC attorney Chuck Mullins, "nor do they jeopardize the people living near them. The interest groups can still come

in and see the plants whenever they want, more or less."

Says Peter Bloch, the NRC judge who sat on the Comanche Peak licensing board: "It felt like the TU-CASE agreement served everybody. TU publicly admitted it screwed up, and CASE was allowed into the plant. In the meantime, no one was prohibited in any way from coming to the board with a problem."

Dan Berkovitz, the assistant counsel to the Senate subcommittee, agrees that there is an "appearance problem" with such settlements but points out that, in this particular case, TU never asked the whistle-blowers to remain silent as the company did with Joseph Maktal, a Comanche Peak whistle-blower who signed a settlement agreement in 1987 and was subsequently prohibited from talking about the safety allegations he'd made.

"We were convinced that the TU-CASE agreement did not undermine the safety of Comanche Peak," Berkovitz says. "However, this practice in general has the potential to jeopardize safety. Money shouldn't be an incentive to testify or not testify."

**Incentive, nonetheless:** But whistle-blower Ron Jones, who received money from the TU-CASE settlement, claims the agreement was understood by the workers to be "a buy-off deal" among the workers and that no one was free to speak. Jones, who once worked as an electrical inspector at the plant, claims that one day in 1982 he was locked in a room on-site and intimidated because he had cited 140 non-conforming wiring problems. He was eventually fired and his phone, he claims, has since been tapped.

Whistle-blower Macktal claims his life has been threatened repeatedly and, according to his attorney, was run down by a car in Colorado before he testified to the Senate subcommittee in 1989.

On March 8, *60 Minutes* covered one of the latest chapters in the harassment story: that of ex-Comanche Peak worker Linda Porter and more than 2,000 others who had been exposed to asbestos contained in paint once used at the facility. Porter is now plagued with throat tumors, chronic nerve damage and daily diarrhea. She says some of the paint was eventually auctioned off to the public and claims the remainder was illegally dumped. Porter, who worked as a paint-coating supervisor during the '80s, says some workers, including herself, were punished for insubordination by being exposed to toxins or radiation for inappropriate periods of time.

"There are thousands of workers who have been abused or intimidated at Comanche Peak," says Dow. "They are terrified of retaliation. The Mexicans especially. It's run like a concentration camp."

"I don't think TU will ever come to grips with problems of intimidation and harassment at the plant," says CASE's Ellis.

And however Kafkaesque things have been at Comanche Peak, a concerted movement is now afoot to seek an accounting for two decades' worth of concerns. Dow has recently petitioned the NRC to reopen hearings on the operating permit granted to Reactor 1 shortly after the TU-CASE settlement. In the meantime, he plans to be in court throughout the spring, in five states, challenging everyone from the NRC to TU to CASE on issues from workers' rights to questions of fraud and safety abuses at Comanche Peak.

Four million people in north central Texas await the outcome.

Michael Paterniti is a freelance writer in Ann Arbor, Mich.

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# Eastern Europe

Continued from page 7

of the World War II fascist military dictator, Marshal Ion Antonescu, has unanimous public consent. Political parties of all stripes are virtually at each others' throats to claim the legacy of "Romania's greatest national hero." On June 1, 1991, the 51st anniversary of Antonescu's execution, the Romanian parliament observed a minute of silence for its nation's misjudged son. "After 44 years, history has finally allowed the Romanians to shed a tear and light a candle for Ion Antonescu," wrote the leading democratic opposition daily *Romania Libra*.

One wonders who shed tears during Antonescu's 1940-44 rule—a time when 400,000 Jews and tens of thousands of Gypsies lost their lives. In *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Hannah Arendt describes the horrors of the Romanian concentration camps as "more

elaborate and more atrocious" than anything in Germany. She writes that in August 1941, before the Final Solution orders were given, Goebbels complained to Hitler that "Antonescu proceeds in these matters in a far more radical fashion than we have done up to the present."

Typically, the revisionists kindle the image of the nationalist leader as the anti-communist patriot, the martyred savior of their misunderstood and long-suffering country. It was Antonescu, Romanians point out, who won back Romania's eastern territories in Bessarabia, annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940 under the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. The marshal's partnership with the fascist Iron Guard and Nazi Germany was simply a matter of national realpolitik, they say, the unlucky fate of being squeezed between the Soviet Union and the Axis Alliance. As for the Romanian Holocaust, they argue, it is a lie that Antonescu killed the Jews. In fact,

he saved them. And the Gypsies, well...

In every country, intellectuals have also jumped on the nationalist bandwagon. For many, the new religion serves as convenient therapy for their years of hack scholarship under communism. The nationalist fervor in Romania has fueled virulent anti-Semitism, a thriving ultra-right, bloody ethnic violence in Transylvania and regular pogroms against the Gypsies.

Yet even in opposition circles, intellectuals have refused to take a principled stand. The editor of Romania's leading liberal intellectual journal, 22, recently wrote: "Romanians are a temperate, tolerant and hospitable people. The presentation of Romania as a country where the extreme right flourishes unhindered, as well as other such charges, is deeply unpatriotic." Elsewhere, even some of the most critical intellectuals argue that, with the priority of economic restructuring at hand, there simply "isn't time" for a histor-

ical *Aufarbeitung*.

**Fanning the flames:** In Yugoslavia, the manipulation of national myths and a cut-throat war of histories paved the way for the grisly conflict that has raged over the past year between Serbs and Croats. With self-serving and partial versions of the '40s, nationalist historians helped rouse the passionate hatreds that had lain dormant for years in communist Yugoslavia.

The legacy of World War II is a painful one for all Yugoslavs. Of the nearly 1 million people killed, as many fell in interethnic strife among themselves as died fighting the Nazis. Today, the Croats insist that the number of Serbs, Gypsies and Jews massacred in the camps of the quisling Axis-allied Croatian state was only a tiny fraction of that claimed by the communists. Rather, Serbian royalist Chetniks were the real butchers. Croatia's 1990-elected President Franjo Tudjman made his name in the '60s as a maverick historian who charged that only 30,000 people perished at the hands of the Ustashe fascists. One of Tudjman's first acts in office was to order that the Square for the Victims of Fascism in the capital of Zagreb be renamed the Square of the Croatian Giants. In the president's nationalist speeches, the words and symbols of the brutal wartime state appear again and again.

For Serbian politicians, meanwhile, Tudjman's nationalist party is synonymous with the Ustashe itself. Radical historians have stoked the fires, arguing that the blood-thirsty Ustashe slaughtered well over 1 million Serbs alone. The real memories and exaggerated horror stories have combined to strike the fear of God in the Serbian minority in Croatia. It is the legacy of the genocidal Ustashe state, the minority insists, that has driven them to take up arms against an independent Croatia.

The ease with which the nationalists have rekindled historical resentments and traditional chauvinisms bears witness to the communist regime's neglect of history. In the tense climate of postwar Eastern Europe, the new powers expediently circumnavigated the full truth of their citizens' wartime collaboration and atrocities in order to consolidate power as quickly as possible. Since communism represented the final victory over nationalism and fascism, the states simply denied the sources and continuities of those ideologies in society. But below the surface, the old antagonisms festered. At the same time, under the guise of socialist rhetoric, the ruling elites ruthlessly manipulated nationalisms from above, perpetuating many of the totalitarian structures of fascism in the communist systems. When those historical nationalist ideologies raised their heads in the form of anti-communist opposition, the regimes quashed the "counterrevolutionary" movements and imprisoned their leaders.

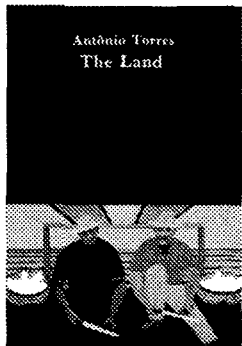
In the knotty questions of the past, however, the majority of the Western left cannot escape some blame for the situation in post-communist Eastern Europe. The left's blunted criticisms of the East bloc dictatorships only contributed to the tarnished reputation of socialism of any kind that exists today in Eastern and Central Europe. Western leftists wax indignant about East Europeans' refusal to differentiate between a democratic socialism and Stalinism when they themselves never drew a clear line.

But, it seems, that part of history is also quickly forgotten.

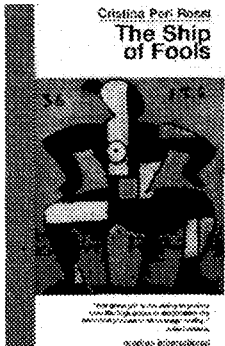
**Paul Hockenos** is working on a book about the right in post-Cold War Eastern Europe.

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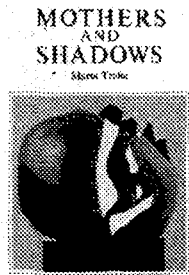
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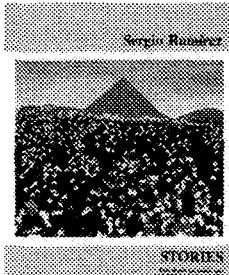
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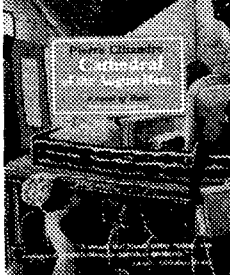
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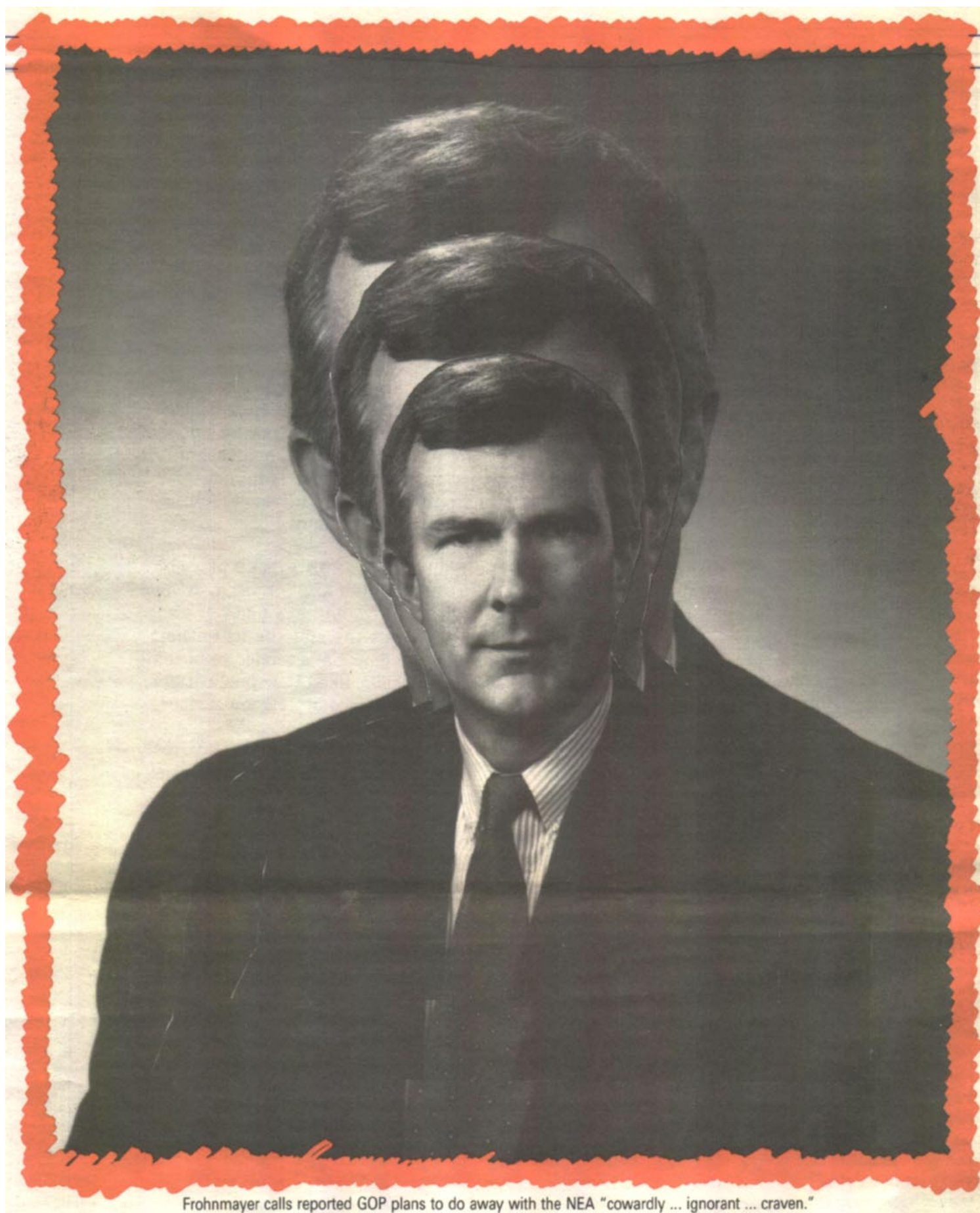


What if practitioners of the "art of politics" were forced to survive on grant money like real artists? If that were the case, George Bush surely would have had his funding revoked—on the grounds of public crudity—for the ousting of John E. Frohnmayer as chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Officially, Frohnmayer is "resigning" from the endowment, effective May 1. But Washington insiders say Frohnmayer was forced out.

GOP presidential candidate Patrick Buchanan had made the endowment's funding of "controversial" projects (such as those by and about homosexuals) a campaign issue. Frohnmayer was fired just two days after Buchanan's strong showing in the February 18 New Hampshire primary.

Frohnmayer has chosen not to leave quietly. On March 25, in a National Press Club address sponsored by The American University, he offered his views on the complicated relationship between artists and the government. *In These Times* thought the speech so extraordinary that we decided to publish it in its entirety. Frohnmayer stressed that these were his own views, not those of the NEA.

**Ousted National Endowment for the Arts Chairman John E. Frohnmayer paints a dark picture of the custodians of this nation's morals.**



Frohnmayer calls reported GOP plans to do away with the NEA "cowardly ... ignorant ... craven."

# A portrait of the NEA

By John E. Frohnmayer

**D**emocracy is constantly in a process of becoming.

It is never fixed, never secure, never comfortable. To protect, renew and maintain our democracy, we have the First Amendment: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or of the right of the people peaceably to assem-

ble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

Each generation must re-enfranchise both our democracy and the First Amendment, and, because of three tensions in our societal fabric, our generation is having more difficulty than most. What we are really involved in here—with government-supported arts as a focal point—is a redefinition of the social contract for our generation. I will return to these three tensions soon.

The First Amendment tells us that religion, ideas, associations and criticism of the government all belong to the people. Since all art deals with ideas and expression, the speaker or artist is protected by the First Amendment from government interference except in three clearly defined areas: criminal behavior (perjury, fraud, forgery, bribery); physically dangerous behavior; obscenity.

The rub comes, then, when the government supports this individual free expression under the general welfare provision of the Constitution. All civilized governments over history have supported the arts, as should ours, but in so doing, the government must respect the speaker. It must provide a level playing field, without blacklists or ideological preconceptions.

When the artist, as speaker, expresses what some deem dangerous, radical, blasphemous or crude ideas we encounter the kind of free for all we in the arts have been experiencing for the last three years. Congress has gotten more mail, most generated by right-wing fundamentalist groups, on the arts issue than on the S&L scandal—which will cost each person more than \$2,000. The arts cost 68 cents for everything we do each year.

**Naked Venus and the devil's music:**

How do we deal with all this? First, some history.



For every great age of art, there has been an age of repression. In Mannheim, Germany, in 1853, the statue of the Venus de Milo was put on trial and convicted and condemned—for nudity. The accounting of that story does not tell us whether she was represented by counsel, read her rights, asked to testify or even whether, without arms, she would have been able to clothe herself had she suddenly been struck with a fit of unscheduled modesty.

In the '20s, the great age of the birth of jazz, there was an "anti-jazz" movement to censor this form of American music. A professor "proved" that pregnant women who listened to jazz were likely to have deformed children. Jazz was described by its critics as "decadent," the devil's music and composed of "jungle rhythms." Even serious critics had problems with the art, stating that since jazz is improvised, it is contrary to discipline. The critics had their way in certain cases. In Chicago, no trumpet or saxophone playing was allowed after dark; a band was locked up for playing jazz; and a ship with a jazz band performing on board turned around in the Atlantic Ocean, after complaints from the passengers, and brought the band back.

Let's get closer to home. The National Endowment for the Arts funded a film called *Poison* that depicts, allegorically, the AIDS epidemic, societal violence and homosexual relations. It is an award-winning film, picked by a panel of award-winning directors and film experts. Congress received thousands of protest letters, most of which came from people who hadn't seen it.

Similarly, the endowment funded a publication called *The Portable Lower East Side* which contained a graphic and disturbing poem depicting the thoughts of a 13-year-old black child involved in the brutal rape and near killing of a female jogger in Central Park. Six lines were taken out of context and mailed to members of Congress. I am told that my defense of the literary merit of that poem was the precipitating event of my firing. Much of the poem was later printed in *The Washington Post*, allowing citizens to make up their own minds as to its value.

Artists, often without varnish and sometimes without civility, tell us the truth as they see it. Sometimes they're right and sometimes they're wrong; sometimes they're profound and sometimes not. They might tell us unkind truths in unseemly ways. But, as Willa Cather said, "Artistic growth is ... a refining of the sense of truthfulness. The stupid believe that to be truthful is easy; only the artist, the great artist, knows how difficult it is."

Similarly, several works have been attacked by religious groups claiming sacrilege or blasphemy: specifically, Andres Serrano's *Piss Christ* and David Wojnarowicz' depiction of Christ with a crown of thorns and a needle in his arm. Neither of these has provoked theological debate about the nature of Christ taking on the sins of the world and the cross as a symbol of man's inhumanity to the Son of God. Rather, they have been widely depicted (and accepted by most) as blasphemous. This is an issue entirely driven by fundamentalists. Mainline religion has simply not commented.

### Neo-Know-Nothings:

That sets the stage. Now let me return to the tensions I mentioned above.

The first is the tension between the First Amendment (with its premise that we solve our

problems through the vigorous clash of ideas) and a pervasive strain of anti-intellectualism in American life. I define anti-intellectualism as the unwillingness to use thought, facts and critical discourse to solve problems. We once had a political party in the U.S. that proudly called itself the "Know-Nothings" whose agenda was against "Negroes, foreigners and Catholics." Abraham Lincoln said that if the Know-Nothings ever gained control, he would prefer "emigrating to some country where they make no pretense of loving liberty ... where despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of hypocrisy."

Recently, the utter unimportance of facts in the attacks on the endowment has been astonishing—particularly coming from alleged religious leaders. But most shameless are those attacks recently mounted by would-be presidential candidate Patrick Buchanan.

The second tension is between the clause prohibiting establishment of a religion and a sense of "chosenness" in American political discourse. Take out a nickel. It says: "In God We Trust." The Pledge of Allegiance to our country acknowledges that we are a nation "under God." Political leaders feel comfortable in telling God to bless us. There is a sense that one must exercise religion (in Dwight Eisenhower's words, no matter what it is) to succeed in politics. Couple political use of religious trappings with the theological reductionism that underlies both fundamentalism and anti-intellectualism and we see why people are calling for laws against blasphemy. (Of course, we have no laws against blasphemy because both the establishment and free exercise clauses of the First Amendment prohibit them.)

The third tension is between the right of assembly and the electronic isolation that our technology has brought us. T.S. Eliot said: "[Television] is a medium of entertainment which permits millions of people to listen to the same joke at the same time, and yet remain lonesome."

With the exception of an occasional school board meeting, we have precious few town meetings or other opportunities for real public debate and discourse. Hence the lobbing of electronic bombs by print or airwaves seldom allows an issue to be squarely confronted, let alone debated.

Thomas Mann said: "Speech is civilization itself. The word, even the most contradictory word, preserves contact—it is silence which isolates."

In front of our television sets, we are both silent and isolated.

### Arts in the modern world:

So how do we, in this generation, re-enfranchise the First Amendment and deal with the tensions just described? It will take, in my view, a commitment to build a new social understanding; a vigorous and honest debate to redefine what truths and values define us. We hear lots of talk about "family values" but precious little definition of what that term means. Truths are not self-evident these days, and unless we take advantage of the permission the First Amendment gives us to duke it out intellectually, our diverse society will become increasingly brittle until it breaks apart.

We must address, calmly and honestly at least: racial and ethnic differences, tolerance, equality

of economic opportunity, education and individual responsibility.

The answer to none of these issues is clear, so we must be prepared to live with ambiguity, frustration, failure and false starts. To do so will require a generosity of spirit that can be born only of a commitment not to let our noble experiment in democracy fail.

I do have some suggestions on how this discourse might be promoted and, not surprisingly, they involve the arts. First, education in the arts. The National Endowment for the Arts has a mandate, and I quote from our enabling legislation: "[T]he world leadership which has come to the United States cannot rest solely upon superior power, wealth and technology but must be solidly founded upon worldwide respect and admiration for the nation's high qualities as a leader in the realm of ideas and the spirit."

Art helps define the American spirit, that mix of practicality and spirituality, that we must nurture, encourage and defend. Passionate idealists founded this country, and the Constitution reflects that spirit which liberates and guarantees the ascendancy of ideas. We must educate our children, heart and mind and body, if we are to remain a world leader and a nation of real community. We must teach them necessary habits of the mind, mental toughness, and love of knowledge.

The arts teach creativity. They challenge the student to think broadly, to attempt the new, and to risk failure. The arts free young people to see and hear as well as read and write, to make order out of chaos, to view the world's challenges and problems through multiple perspectives. The arts help children to dare new expression, try various approaches to problem-solving, use intuition as well as reason and develop the discipline required for success in life.

The arts are also fundamental to the democratic system because they demand involvement. Every child who has honestly written a poem or performed a song or dance has been forever changed. That child has made a covenant of honesty and risk—of communication and commitment to a community. That child has laid vulnerable a part of the self and has placed faith in the community to respond. That child has become a citizen.

Second, the arts give an opportunity to build community. In this increasingly attack-oriented society, we need some way to begin a dialogue to build that social consensus that will allow us to survive. The arts, often through non-verbal means, give that opportunity. Look how jazz, salsa and Eastern traditions have influenced Western composition and performance; or dance with the same amalgamations. Students in grade-school class in Los Angeles, after a week of Latino visual artists, musicians and dancers, are much less inclined to terrorize Latino classmates after school. T.S. Eliot wrote: "Poetry can communicate before it is understood."

Third, intellectual research. We spend billions on scientific research, but how much on development of our humanism? We have cleaved our brains in half and have left off development of our creative side. That ephemeral ability to make connections between seemingly unrelated ideas or theorems—so essential to the growth of mankind's knowledge—is the stock and trade of the arts. Japan and Germany know this, and art education, art support and reverence for art are central to their societies. Perhaps we will remember it, too; and perhaps it will not be too late.

That leads to my fourth point—which is intensely practical. Our second most positive balance of trade item is the export of copyrightable materials: movies, television, literature, software. The National Endowment for the Arts has been the farm club for this industry for 27 years—for the insignificant sum of 68 cents per

person. It is part of an incredible economic engine, the demolition of which, on purely economic analysis, would be foolhardy.

### Senators against the Constitution:

Upon my abrupt departure, there has been lots of talk about what to do with the endowment. Rich Bond, head of the Republican Party, is reported to have said he might suggest to the president just to abolish the agency. How cowardly; how ignorant; what a craven example to the rest of the world. I fervently hope the president will reject such rubbish. Leadership is confronting and wrestling with our problems, not surrendering to what is easiest.

Others counsel funding only of "safe art"—of the work of dead white European males. We are a diverse country with diverse voices—it's our greatest strength and our greatest challenge. To retreat to such a fortress mentality is to abdicate leadership, to admit governmental impotence and to deprive the next generation of its opportunity to struggle with new work, new ideas, new challenges. That's not the America I love.

And some have counseled that Congress simply needs "cover." We have to give them some palliative so they can claim to have stood tall against obscenity when Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC) and others introduce their next obscenity amendment—every year, every month, maybe every day. The decency language inserted in 1990 was such a palliative. Decency, of course, is in the mind of the hearer. The First Amendment, on the other hand, protects the speaker.

To me, the most damning sound bite is not: "My opponent voted for obscenity," but rather, "My opponent jettisoned our precious right of free expression to cover his fanny." All of us in government are sworn to defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic, and for two-thirds of both houses to have voted for the last Helms language, which would pass constitutional muster on no level, in my view violates that oath.

The answer of how to save the National Endowment for the Arts is very simple. It is to reaffirm that we, as a country, want to be a leader in the realm of ideas and of the spirit. It is to read, believe and embrace the First Amendment, which allows us to be that leader. To kill the endowment because of a few disturbing lines or images poses a far greater threat to this nation than anything that has ever been funded. It would be a craven admission that we are not strong enough to let all voices be heard.

You or I don't have to like everything the endowment supports because your government is not the sponsor of those ideas; it is merely an enabler. The ideas belong to our diverse and sometimes brilliant artists—patriots who are bold enough to tell the truth as they see it.

To those of you from other lands where speaking the truth has cost you the lives of loved ones, personal imprisonment and hardships of the soul that we in America cannot imagine, I dedicate the words of the poet Sam Hazo:

"I wish you what I wish  
myself: hard questions  
and the nights to answer them,  
and grace of disappointment,  
and the right to seem the fool  
for justice. That's enough.  
Cowards might ask for more.  
Heroes have died for less."





# EDITORIAL

## IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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## House bank "scandal" plays well as circus

Desperate to blame the Democrats for the effects of 12 years of Reagan-Bush policies, Republicans seized on recent disclosures about overdrafts in the House bank to inflate them into a major scandal. Rep. Guy Vander Jagt of Michigan, chairman of the Republican congressional committee, compared the cashing of uncovered checks to Watergate. That, he said, had been a Republican scandal "because Republicans were in charge." This, he claimed, "is a Democrat scandal because Democrats were clearly in charge." President Bush joined in the attack on March 20, when he vetoed the tax bill just passed by Congress. Taunting Democratic lawmakers because they "cannot manage a tiny bank," he called for a new Congress. "You give me the right lawmakers," he said, "and I'll give you the right laws."

Vander Jagt's pathetic analogy and the president's inane non sequitur only confirm their own dishonesty and shallowness. Watergate involved a Republican president who hired burglars to steal documents from the Democratic campaign committee in the middle of a presidential election. It was a criminal act, and the perpetrator was the head of the Republican Party, or one of his top aides. And, because of that, it led to the first resignation of a sitting president in the history of our nation. The bank "scandal," in contrast, involves no violation of the law, provided no partisan advantage to Democratic House members and resulted from practices that go back 100 years. True, the management of the bank reflects poorly on the Democratic Speaker of the House as an administrator, but it has nothing to do with the policymaking function of legislation—which even our sappy president must know is what lawmakers are elected for.

**Diversion or symptom?** In large part, the bad-check flap is merely a bad rap, mindlessly exaggerated by the media. Listening to the news on radio or TV, how many Americans know that virtually no checks bounced? (Of 19,373 overdraft checks on 66 accounts examined in detail by the House Ethics Committee, only 120 checks on nine accounts were returned unpaid.) Or that while nothing was charged for overdrafts, neither was interest paid on money deposited? Or that all bank funds consisted of House members deposits, so overdrafts were paid with other members' money? Or that in almost all cases, House members were not informed about overdrafts, which were covered by their next month's paychecks deposited automatically into their accounts? In short, how many Americans know

that this scandal cost the taxpayers nothing?

Yet Americans are angry, even many who know all this. They see the House bank as just one more example of the corruption of our government by special interests who can do anything they want. They believe that many legislators have been in office too long, that they have come to identify more and more closely with the privileged elite of our society and that, in the process, they have lost touch with the way their constituents live.

Already, the scandal has taken a heavy toll. In Chicago, Rep. Charles Hayes (D-IL) narrowly lost his primary race a week after it was revealed that he had floated 716 checks in 39 months and was among the 24 biggest offenders. In New York, Democratic Rep. Robert J. Mrazek, who had foregone re-election to the House to run for the Senate this year, dropped out of that race when it was revealed that he had floated 972 checks. And several other House members have announced their retirement this year, though it is unclear what role check floating played in their decisions.

House Republicans, led by Minority Whip Newt Gingrich (R-GA), pushed for full disclosure of overdrafts in the expectation that this would be to his party's advantage. Since there are many more Democrats than Republicans in the House, he expected to come out ahead. And he may also have understood that since Republican officials tend to be wealthier than their Democratic counterparts, a smaller proportion would have been tempted to overdraw their accounts. Yet, even though Democrats constitute a large majority of those so far identified as check kitters, this tactic seems to have backfired. Prominent Republicans like Vin Weber (R-MN), secretary of the Republican Conference and one of Gingrich's close allies, reportedly floated 125 checks. And Mickey Edwards (R-OK), chairman of the Republican Policy Committee and one of Gingrich's longtime rivals, floated 386.

Even more embarrassing, three of Bush's cabinet ministers reportedly floated checks when they were in Congress. Defense Secretary Dick Cheney, a fierce partisan when he was in the House (1979-89), held a briefing from the Pentagon that was reminiscent of Gulf War days. Carried live by CNN, the briefing included blowups of Cheney's overdrafts accompanied by limp explanations. The other two, Agriculture Secretary Edward Madigan (R-IL, 1973-91) and Labor Secretary Lynn Martin (R-IL, 1981-91) kept low profiles as they reported having floated dozens of checks.

In the end, this flap will probably provide little or no partisan advantage, but it has already diverted attention from a host of basic issues that should be examined in this election year. Given the proclivities of leaders of both parties to avoid such discussion, however, this may hurt them a good deal less than it will the public at large.



# LETTERS

## Vulgar redbaiting

I SHARE PETE KARMAN'S DISGUST AT ALEXANDER Cockburn's defense (in *The Nation*) of the Warren Commission cover-up of the Kennedy assassination (*ITT*, March 11). Cockburn is justified in challenging the premise that JFK would have ended the U.S. war against Vietnam. His decision to go a step further with a fawning interview of a Warren Commission apologist is baffling, even somewhat of an embarrassment to one who often appreciates his writings.

Karman would have done *ITT* readers a service if he had stuck to rebutting Cockburn's support of the "lone, crazed assassin" theory. Instead he felt compelled to mimic the worst of Cockburn's abrasive style of argument. Trotting out the "Stalinist" label (not once but four times!) was vulgar and gratuitous old-style redbaiting. It had nothing to do with the flaws in Cockburn's position. In fact, the Cockburn quote that Karman used as "evidence" of Stalinist thinking actually was just the opposite: a caution that twisting history, even for good ends, is a dangerous business.

Randal Divinski  
Somerville, Mass.

## Over his head?

PETE KARMAN IS EITHER MALICIOUS OR IGNORANT in repeatedly calling Alexander Cockburn a Stalinist in his diatribe on the Kennedy assassination (*ITT*, March 11). I've been reading Cockburn for years and can't think of a single thing he's said that qualifies under that label. Defending the Soviets from a critical left-wing perspective, Cockburn's forte, obviously doesn't count. Or is Karman too politically unschooled to know the difference? If he has evidence for the assertion, he ought to lay it out. Otherwise, he shouldn't bandy about words he clearly doesn't understand.

While he's at it, he should also refrain from foisting on unsuspecting readers statements such as the following: "... Alexander Cockburn, the last of the journalistic Stalinists not to have passed on to Zionism or Majorca." Is this some sort of anti-Semitic slur or has an Ilya Ehrenburg Rest Home and Retirement Village actually sprung up in the Balearics?

Daniel Lazare  
New York

## Details of life

YOUR ACCOUNT OF THE ILLINOIS TEACHER WHO "based [her] curriculum ... this week around foods we eat and fruits we grow" ("The First Stone," March 25) left vague the details. Fruit Roll-Ups at my local store cost \$2.19 for eight, or about \$.27 each. In contrast, an apple (a medium Winesap) costs about \$.10, an orange (medium juice) costs about \$.12, a pear (Bartlett) costs about \$.26 and a banana costs about \$.22. Fruit Roll-Ups' charm is that they provide 2 percent of the recommended daily allowance of vitamin C, while an apple provides 7 percent, a pear 17 percent, a banana 25 percent and an orange 187 percent. The fruits also provide desirable roughage. Further, the Roll-Ups contain Yellow 5, Red 40 and Blue 1, which fruit does not. The Roll-Ups' second ingre-

dient after fruit concentrate is sugar.

None of the above research is beyond the capacity of an average fourth grader who can gather the facts from the store, from dietary tables and from the science texts that are routine in the schools. The mathematics involved is also on their level: division, addition, percents. The alert teacher knows that if the habit of investigating and examining the ordinary details of life begins early, it tends to persist. The children may continue to enjoy the sensory delights of Fruit Roll-Ups, but they will know that in doing so they are being bad. My hunch is that the teacher in question did just what I have described. If she did, then General Mills passed out their samples for nothing, since people in general aren't as dumb as they are often portrayed when they have good data.

Mary Louise Seguel  
DeKalb, Ill.

## Race and rape

I AGREE WITH SALIM MUWAKKIL'S "KILLER COVERAGE: Black stereotypes in the media" (*ITT*, March 25). But his first example comparing the convictions of "black youths ... in the 1990 Central Park jogger rape and beating case" to the exoneration of three "white St. John's University students accused of gang sodomizing a black female student" was wrong. The Central Park case and the St. John's case are very different. I think there is another lesson to be learned about racism in the press from a more thorough analysis.

The Central Park jogger case was only questionably a gang rape, and more certainly an attempted murder. Similar *intraracial* cases that occurred in New York City around the same time got very little attention from the news media. In both those cases, the alleged perpetrators were also convicted.

In contrast, I'd put the St. John's case in the category of acquaintance group sexual assaults (not accompanied by other physical violence). I have investigated 33 such cases that were reported on campuses in the last 10 years. There has been a conviction after a jury trial in only one of these 33 cases. In the one case that resulted in a guilty verdict, the victim was an African-American woman and the defendants were African-American men (football players). I attended another trial in which a white Southern jury acquitted six African-American college football players of raping and sodomizing a white classmate. The youths admitted having oral and vaginal intercourse with her in tandem and "rotating." The defense successfully argued that she con-

sented. In two *intraracial* cases, a 17-year-old African-American woman charged six men, including a minority aide, with raping her in a dormitory, and the jury acquitted them; in the other, four white fraternity men were charged with raping and sodomizing (with a toothpaste dispenser) an unconscious 18-year-old white woman, and ended up copping pleas before the jury heard the case.

These cases are extremely difficult to prosecute. The woman who accused six football players of rape and sodomy went to the police the same night and was examined in a hospital in time to preserve the physical evidence. But, much like the St. John's case, the defense had six men and their buddies swearing that an eager-to-please young woman came into their territory voluntarily, had a few drinks and lost control. The prosecution's case rested primarily on the young woman with an impaired memory and inconsistent story testifying that it occurred against her will. In such cases, it is difficult for a jury not to have *some doubt* that the men's account might be true. It is implausible that the woman in the St. John's case wanted to have a bunch of white jocks beat her in the face with their penises, but, from my observations of these campus cases and several off-campus cases, if the defense is consent and the victim suffered only a few visible bruises, the case won't stick.

The more interesting lesson in racism of the media comes from comparing the Central Park jogger case to truly analogous cases. Around the same time as the jogger was found beaten nearly to death in Manhattan, a black woman was abducted off a Brooklyn street at knifepoint by three men, taken up to a rooftop, raped and thrown from the building. She survived the fall. Like the Central Park jogger, she had to learn to walk again. In other ways, she did not recover from the trauma as well and remained institutionalized. In the Bronx, a white woman and her teenage daughter were raped and sodomized with a bedpost, etc., while tied to the crib of the woman's infant daughter by a group of teenagers who had previously killed the woman's husband and stolen the keys to his apartment. These were life-threatening attacks by strangers. No one can argue the women consented.

The *New York Times*, in a defensive article responding to criticism of its excessive coverage of the Central Park jogger, commented that the public did not pay much attention to these latter cases or to other rape cases in which most victims were minority women. It was difficult to pay attention when we were barely told that these assaults occurred.

Media analysts concerned about racism have been swayed by faulty coverage to compare the jogger and St. John's cases. But the real problem is that the crime against the black woman who was thrown off the roof did not receive adequate coverage; and she did not receive anything like the public support offered the jogger.

Muwakkil quotes Elombe Brath's observation that "the *News* and the *Post* are racist publications, pure and simple." That doesn't mean we should overlook the invidious and complex racism in the *Times*. *Times* editorialists argued that the jogger case was not about racial animosities or about class. Refusing to consider the role of gender, along with Ted Koppel on *Nightline*, the *Times* claimed to be puzzled by the random violence. As Mike Kamber wrote in *Z*, what really grabbed the attention of the mainstream media was that it was one of "us" who got it from one of "them." "They" (separated by race and class) are supposed to kill each other. When they do, it's not news. That's the racism we should not let the press get away with—that the Brooklyn woman's victimization is not news of the same order—and that racism sexism is not found only in the *Post* and the *Daily News* but also in the "quality" white press.

The black press in New York City was also silent about the Brooklyn woman, while coming noisily to the defense of the St. John's victim and those accused in the jogger case. Are African-American crime victims deserving of attention and support only when they are harmed by whites? Since most crimes are *intraracial* and most crime victims are poor, aren't we saying, then, that it's not a problem when it happens to "them"?

Only *Ms.* covered the African-American women who joined together in the aftermath of the Brooklyn woman's victimization and marched the streets to protest violence in their community. I think this bespeaks the need to see commonality in group violence by men, against rich and poor, white and black women. Then we can begin to consider the common sources of the violence, and to support all victims, regardless of their race and class or those of their assailants.

Chris O'Sullivan  
Lewisburg, Pa.

**Editor's note:** Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

## SYLVIA



## by Nicole Hollander





By Omar Barnet  
& M. Spencer Martin

**I**T HAS BECOME DISTURBINGLY FASHIONABLE among left journalists to brand Oliver Stone (and his film *JFK*) and Daniel Sheehan (and the Christic Institute) "conspiracy theorists." This process mixes valuable criticism with nitpicking, and consequently, major truths have been lost and their impact blunted. Stone and the Christic Institute have opened the door to the seamy inside of the national security state and shed light upon their war against the poor of the Third World and the U.S.

What is conspiracy? It is when two or more persons agree to commit a crime. It is not necessarily all-encompassing or contrary to U.S. policy. Many conspiracies are well within the institutional framework of U.S. foreign policy.

In *The Nation*, Alexander Cockburn, making the same point as Daniel Schorr and other liberals, says that since Kennedy was just another Cold Warrior, agents and agencies of the U.S. intelligence community had no reason to kill him. Cockburn implies that, therefore, he was not killed with U.S. intelligence connivance. This is, in effect, an endorsement of the official Warren Commission lone assassin fantasy.

Similarly in *The Nation*, David Corn blasts both *JFK* and the Christic Institute, stating flatly that Gen. Edward Lansdale did not run "a covert Pentagon-based paramilitary unit that could blow away a president." (Is Corn omniscient?) Such a statement begs and evades all the significant questions. Lansdale had enormous capacity—and the prestige—to run any kind of operation, even after he resigned three weeks before Kennedy's murder.

Corn claims that the "silly 'secret team'" theory of the Christic Institute holds that "a small band of military and intelligence officials have in the past three decades hijacked and perverted U.S. foreign policy." Our reading of the Christic Institute analysis is that a group of men—Ray Cline, Theodore Shackley, Raphael Quintero, Felix Rodriguez, Richard Secord, Frank Sturgis and E. Howard Hunt being the best known of many—have done the dirty work of our policymakers since the Bay of Pigs. They have at least worked in association, though by no means always in harmony (e.g., Rodriguez hates Secord for profiteering from contra arms sales). Nowhere does the Christic Institute claim that

## Questioning the latest conspiracy to dismiss conspiracy theorists

U.S. foreign policy was once good and just and has now been "hijacked" by "underhanded operatives." Of course, the Christic Institute, in a process of outreach beyond the urban left-liberal establishment, has held up the *ideals* of justice and democracy because, unlike *The Nation's* columnists, they (and we) cannot afford complete cynicism.

The fact is that in pursuing a case through the U.S. legal system it is necessary to use legal terminology, and "conspiracy" has specific currency in U.S. law. This does not imply that a conspiracy is contrary to U.S. foreign policy but that it is contrary to the law.

Corn ends with the throw away that "Stone deserves two cheers for reminding people that the government lies (c.f. the Warren Commission)." Wait a minute. If the Warren Commission lied in saying there was no conspiracy, then there was a conspiracy. This is the central issue.

The impact of *JFK* does not hinge on Ed Lansdale, JFK's goodness or postulation of a conspiracy contrary to the honorable history of U.S. foreign policy. Critics have been dismantling Saint Jack of Camelot for 28 years now. However, Stone suggests that Kennedy's assassination was in fact consistent with the prevailing winds in the Pentagon at the time. Kennedy let down the right-wing military/intelligence establishment when he failed to back up the Bay of Pigs invasion. He fired Allen Dulles, Richard Bissell and Charles Cabell—all pillars of hard-right militarism. Kennedy may have allowed Operation Mongoose and other knavery to be undertaken, but the real powers in the Pentagon could never trust him. He was too pretty, too rich and perceived to be too liberal by the standards of the time.

The real import of the film is in the exhibition for a mass audience of the extent to which Pentagon policy and the (dare we say it?) conspiracy surrounding the assassination are contrary to the principles of democracy and justice within which we would like to live, and which our country claims to embody.

**Wasteful introspection:** Stone's rendering of *JFK* may not be perfect, and the Christic Institute has made mistakes. Nevertheless, each has made a powerful call for justice and a strong—in the case of *JFK*,

a huge—cultural impact. Each has opened a window into some ugly and important truths. Establishment liberals and conservatives labor mightily to close this window. But the left-progressive elite is busy splitting hairs instead of bursting through and focusing light on the facts.

Many others have chimed in with the conspiracy-bashing chorus. Michael Albert, in a piece titled "Conspiracy, Not!," takes unnamed left organizations to task, blaming them (in a fatuous logical leap) for racial stereotyping and actually paving the way for David Duke! (Albert also links those who identify "'secret teams' of CIA operatives" to obviously right-wing theorists of all-powerful networks of Arab financiers and worldwide Jewish bankers' fraternities.) "Isn't it plausible that the *relatively huge resources* [our emphasis] thrown into progressive conspiracy writing, organizing and proselytizing over the past decade is now coming home to roost?"

We think Albert is just mad that all those folks gave money to the Christic Institute and not to *Z Magazine*! Of course there is irrelevant and phony conspiracy mongering, but that doesn't mean there are no "teams" and "conspiracies" within institutional structures. Is that so hard to comprehend?

Michael Massing, writing in *The Nation*, criticizes "a peculiar species of drug-war literature," saying that "the vast majority of [U.S.-bound cocaine] shipments have nothing whatsoever to do with the CIA." In his haste to bash the "conspiracy theorists," Massing ignores statements by men from the trenches like Michael Levine and Dennis Doyle who said, "In my 30-year history in the Drug Enforcement Administration and related agencies, the major targets of my investigations almost invariably turned out to be working for the CIA."

The regular conferring of immunity on criminals who supposedly help U.S. foreign policy objectives has had the effect of encouraging drug smuggling and has provided incentives for drug traffickers to work with U.S. covert operations. Most of Michael Levine's really big cases were blown by U.S. government interference. It isn't that the CIA is actually shipping the drugs but rather that their clients control the flow of drugs in several key countries, and their operatives are let off the hook if caught in the U.S. In this business, a wink and a nod go a long way.

Elizabeth Pochoda (in a column in *The Nation*) dismisses the conspiracy theorists as guilty by association. She sandwiches the "leftist" Christic Institute between Lyndon LaRouche and the pathetic Reed Irvine—a sorry slur that tells us what we need to know about Pochoda, but nothing more.

Jim Ridgeway writes a whole article in the *Village Voice* ridiculing theories of right-wing conspiracies and links them to "the many tales circulating in the press about the October Surprise or the shadowy CIA connection to the BCCI scandal." He concludes with the hoary liberal cop-out that we will probably never know the truth. His article is no help.

Joel Bleifuss and Chip Berlet have made

some serious points about the intermingling of right-wingers with some elements of the Christic Institute. They point out that not only are facts liable to be commingled with outrageous assertions and thus discredited but that good right-thinking people are liable to be discredited by their association with right-wingers. But right-wing types such as Bo Gritz and Fletcher Prouty must be considered credible witnesses in their own field of expertise and from their own personal experience. Such firsthand corroboration of charges coming from the left should be used to promote the truth.

One consequence of writing off the testimony of right-wingers is that we would be forced to discredit the work of Mark Lane, remarkable in his logic and the painstaking legal process through which he has made his observations. His book *Plausible Denial* is a masterpiece of legal procedure, being the record of his representation of Willis Carto against E. Howard Hunt and the U.S. intelligence establishment. We fear that Lane's findings have already been dismissed by the left intellectual elite due to his association with Carto. But Lane's book is extremely timely since it corroborates Jim Garrison's basic allegations of the plot to kill Kennedy, but from a different angle.

A well written, researched and footnoted piece of journalism is a thing of great beauty and value. But in the prevailing U.S. legal system, *evidence does not equal proof*. Only after evidence is put through the far-from-infallible crucible of the courts can it be considered to have a certain weight of "proof." Lane offers compelling evidence that has been established in a court of law. The American people deserve an honest assessment of this evidence—not personal attacks in the few pages allotted in progressive publications.

**Some serious questions:** If Stone's *JFK* is wrong, then what is right? Is Jim Garrison "in the pocket of the mob," or has he really been exonerated of these charges by his courtroom acquittal? Is the evidence offered by Lane in *Plausible Denial* basically true, false or irrelevant?

Why hasn't the Causes and Cures Coalition ever been mentioned in the left media? Here is an incredible organizing effort—multiracial, national and reaching well beyond the same old left constituency. A national teleconference was organized featuring real experts meeting with citizens, producing some communication and a few astonishing sound bites (e.g., the quote by Dennis Doyle above).

Have the ideals of democracy and justice in our country been perverted by a group (or shifting, even "competing" groups) of white, male policymakers? Are the JFK murder, the October Surprise, Iran contra, the S&L robberies, U.S. government drug connections, the CIA-BCCI connections all part of the same fabric? While complicity in the murder of millions in Angola, Chile, El Salvador, Mozambique and Nicaragua is surely the greater crime, are not the aforementioned scandals easier for the U.S. public to comprehend and to prosecute, at least through the court of public opinion? Is there a better way to end the larger crimes than to expose the more inflammatory ones—especially the hypocritical drug connivances?

Omar Barnet and M. Spencer Martin are writers in Nashville, Tenn.

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By Jan Myrdal

**A** PURGE IS BEING CONDUCTED IN THE UNIVERSITIES in the former German Democratic Republic. It is partly motivated by budgetary concerns. The resources will not stretch far enough, so the academic corps of the former German Democratic Republic must be trimmed. Too many instructors in the universities cost too much for this poorer part of the new Germany.

It seems a little strange to me that Germany cannot afford its professors. But if that is so, we should pay attention to how the cuts are carried out and who will be purged from the universities and for what reasons. After all, these questions also affect intellectuals outside Germany.

It would be possible to inquire into the scholarly credentials of the instructors threatened by the purge, even though weeding out instructors on the basis of their scholarly credentials would be difficult. We know about the academic intrigues in our own universities. But what is now at issue in Germany is not scholarly credentials.

**An old and ugly story:** The German state could justify the purge on ideological grounds. It could say it wants to clean out Marxists and Communists. It could say that the current purge is a counterpart to the denazification the Allied Powers forced through in Germany after World War II, even though denazification was, as we all know, a bad joke. If the German civil service, the German diplomatic corps and the German courts of law are no longer swarming with old Nazis, that is not because denazification was effective. It's because of retirement and death.

But as ideological purges are an old and ugly story in Germany, the state does not say that it is once more conducting an ideological purge as in the old German Empire or the Third Reich. During the Cold War, officials were busy with purges in the West and in the East. There were plenty of purges conducted in the German Democratic Republic. Many of those threatened by purges today played their part in past purges.

I have no sympathy for these people. My books were among those banned. Professors in university departments of Scandinavian languages no doubt took part in the decision to ban *Confessions of a Disloyal European*, which was declared "fascistic and war-mongering literature." ("Contradicts the legal requirements of the German Democratic Republic, therefore not permitted for import.") But this does not prevent me, now, as before, from finding ideologically based purges wrong, destructive and anti-intellectual.

This is not a new position for me. For example, take three intellectuals who played a leading role in Europe 50 years ago. I had read them, and we discussed them at the end of the war: Knut Hamsun, Sven Hedin, E.R. Jaensch. Knut Hamsun was not only the greatest living Norwegian writer, he was one of Quisling's men—as he himself wrote—and he was not senile. Sven Hedin was the greatest Swedish explorer and geographer, well-known in the United States; he had tried to engineer a pro-German coup d'état in Sweden in 1914, he had been one of the leading intellectual supporters of Hitler in Europe. E.R. Jaensch, the



## Purging professors: old habits in the new Germany

German psychologist who, before and after Hitler's takeover, formulated the most coherent scholarly legitimization of racial persecution and anti-Semitism in the essays that are collected in *The Anti-Type (Der Gegentypus)* in 1900. Jaensch was dead, but the others lived. Shouldn't they at least be purged from the bookshelves?

But on my bookshelves, of course, all three are to be found. Hamsun is one of the greatest modern European writers, Hedin a great geographer and Jaensch the founding father of gestalt psychology. The purge that should take place—if "purge" is the correct word—is the one that takes place in the close reading of their work and the debate about it.

**Blunting the intellect:** If the German state purges the ideologically unfit from the universities in the former German Democratic Republic, if they get rid of Marxist medieval historians, Communist statisticians, cultural geographers who base their work on dialectical materialism, linguists who as students were required to write essays about J.V. Stalin's significance for the study of the accusative case in Andersson, or Scandinavianists who specialized in the proletarian literature of the '30s, then this will lower the level of intellectual discussion in Germany. Intellectual standardization of this kind (or, as the Germans say: *Gleichschaltung*, unidirecting) both blunts the intellect and is contagious.

If the German state openly said that the current purges in the universities in the eastern part of Germany were ideological, then it would not be so difficult to mobilize international opinion to save intellectual freedom in Germany. If the German authorities clearly stated that false ideas must be eliminated from the universities, then opinion against this in the American academic world would become very strong. And in our universities, Stockholm and Gothenburg, Uppsala and Lund, not to speak of the more radical universities in the provinces, there would be serious protests from students and faculty.

But the German authorities do not say that. They do not speak plainly. They whisper. They try to treat the purge as something outside normal academic and intellectual life, as a question of honor, like in the old days of the German student fraternities.

There is a discussion about who might possibly have been informers for the Stasi, the former state security agency. That can be researched, of course. There are archives. It is one question to what an extent such activities are morally ambiguous or maybe outright criminal. Criminal cases belong in court, not in extra-legal semi-private bodies. But it is another question whether such activities affect the scholarly competences of those concerned.

Because there has also been darkness here in Sweden, I want to be clear. One of my friends, a leftist, had to have an operation for a fistula in the rectum during the '60s. This is a difficult and delicate operation. The smallest mistake and the patient

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**Thanks to the purge, academic posts are available for the incompetent with the right opinions, the crooked with the right friends.**

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gets his sphincter cut, resulting in lifelong suffering. He had to choose between two surgeons. One was a nice man who shared his opinions, a gentle new man, revolutionary and right-thinking. The other was an unpleasant reactionary who had only contempt for women, halfway fascist. But the second one was more skillful. My friend chose the half-fascist and saved his sphincter.

This is how I see the books I use, as well as academics in both Sweden and Germany. **A question of honor:** With German bureaucratic thoroughness, the authorities have

used the speculation about the Stasi network to set up Honor Commissions (*Ehrenkommissionen*) with Honor-Sub-Commissions (*Ehrenunterkommissionen*) that have studied the Honor Questionnaires (*Ehrenfragebogen*) that the staff were to fill in during the spring. The German university authorities have not brought this questionnaire to the attention of foreign universities, whose faculty members will later be the colleagues of those approved in the sifting process. That I well understood when I read it.

Through my contacts in the afflicted German universities, I was given the forms. I had to promise not to divulge the names of the professors who gave them to me in order to get them published in Sweden in a "democratic way." They were afraid. They were no Communists. One was a liberal and the other a Lutheran. And I know for sure—really for sure—that neither had anything to do with the Stasi.

The questionnaire is eight pages long. It is quite comprehensive. Stasi contacts is just one detail. The questionnaire is construed quite according to the forms set by the political questionnaires of the Third Reich and the former German Democratic Republic. Not only is the respondent supposed to "truthfully" report all the parties and organizations of which he she has been a member and what functions he she has had within the state and in organizations, list honors, memberships of international scholarly associations, etc., but the respondent must also report every single address for the last 10 years, all trips abroad (without time limitation), including trips to the Federal Republic, and so on.

The questionnaire is such a fine mesh that no one who has been normally active in the profession in the former German Democratic Republic can slip through. After completing the form, everyone is "implicated."

With this deviously formulated Honor Questionnaire, Honor Commissioners in the Honor Commissions can quietly purge anyone at their own discretion.

In this way, there is no need to discuss competence and quality of scholarship of those who are to be purged. An ideological purge would have an international echo. Now the authorities can hope that everything will be handled so "honorably" that questions will not be raised outside Germany. If everyone is implicated, you can get rid of anyone without formality. Now careers are being opened in Eastern Germany for retirees from Western Germany with good connections. Posts are available for the incompetent with the right opinions, the crooked with the right friends.

The whole system—with Honor Sub-Commissions working inside Honor Commissions—has been constructed with German bureaucratic efficiency. The pious calculation is that the poor academics in the Eastern part of Germany have been so beaten into submission by the continuous purges, from the Kaiser to Honecker, that they will be unable to protest.

I hope the German authorities are mistaken. In any case, we should do what we can to see that they are.

Jan Myrdal is the author of *Childhood* (Lake View Press) and *Confessions of a Disloyal European*.

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**Angels and Aliens: UFOs and the Mythic Imagination**  
By Keith Thompson  
Addison-Wesley, 283 pp., \$19.95

By Mark G. Judge

ON THE NIGHT OF MARCH 21, 1966, more than 80 people watched a UFO fly over the environs of Hillsdale, a small college town in Michigan. The car-sized, football-shaped object allegedly performed spectacular dips and gyrations and was seen by the dean of the local college, the local civil-defense director and dozens of students before disappearing over a nearby swamp. The sighting was the high-point of a week of airborne apparitions around western Michigan and added hysteria to an increasingly paranoid atmosphere in Hillsdale and the surrounding counties.

The situation got so out of hand that a government UFO specialist, J. Allen Hynek, was sent to Hillsdale to calm fears. (Remember, this was the civil-defense '60s.) Hynek was a consultant for Project Blue Book, the in-

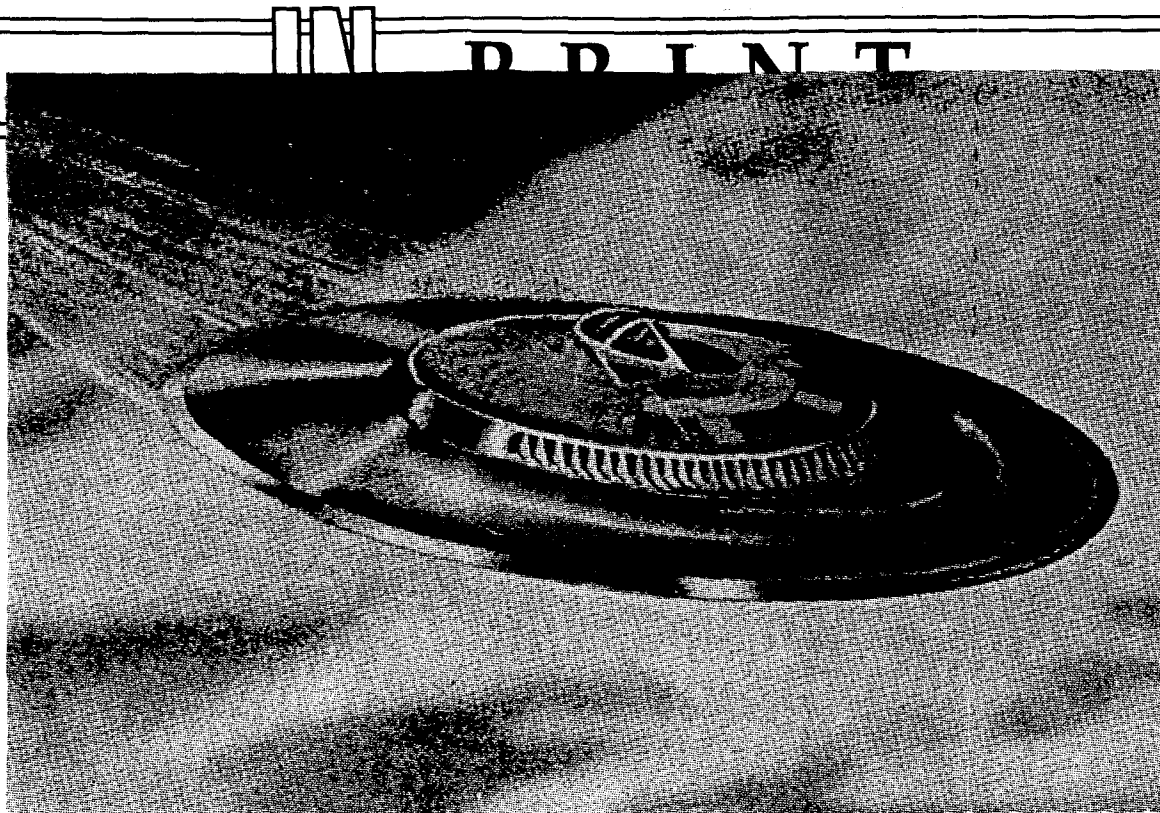
## PHENOMENA

famous agency that specialized in debunking UFO sightings from 1952 to 1969. After a few days of observations, a press conference was hastily called and Hynek presented his theory of what the witnesses at Hillsdale were seeing: swamp gas.

Hynek had heard of cases of methane swamp gas floating up through trees, briefly igniting and causing a bright optical illusion, and Hillsdale was near a swamp. The students, in essence, were being deluded by the phantasms of a farting swamp. The press derided Hynek, while UFO conspiracy buffs went berserk. Hynek, openly disgusted with his own explanation, later became a strong UFO supporter until his death in 1986.

The 1966 "swamp gas debacle" is chronicled in *Angels and Aliens: UFOs and the Mythic Imagination*, but to author Keith Thompson it represents much more than a funny example of boundless public credulity vs. governmental stupidity. To Thompson, Hillsdale is one sidebar to the mythic significance and religious nature of UFOs, whose ongoing appearances are either a portent of the arrival of the space brothers or the manifestation of some preternatural, possibly religious intelligence or spirit.

In other words, it's time to take flying saucers seriously, as the back-cover blurbs from an *Esquire* contributing editor ("as original and provocative a book as you're likely to run into this year") and Sen. Howard Metzenbaum (D-OH) ("the flying saucer has emerged as a provocative symbol for late-20th-century hopes and fears") flatly imply—provided you take *Esquire* or Metzenbaum



## Mything the point of UFOs taints down-to-earth reporting

seriously. (Thompson is not alone among sober scholars in his mission to rekindle E.T.'s life-light. *The New Republic* reported recently that John E. Mack, Pulitzer-Prize-winning Harvard psychiatry professor, has written the favorable introduction to a book called *Secret Life: Firsthand Accounts of UFO Abductions*, to be published by Simon & Schuster.)

**Accept my ufology:** The modern UFO age began on June 25, 1947, when U.S. Forest Service pilot Kenneth Arnold saw nine bright objects flying at "incredible speed" over Mt. Rainier, Wash. The bewildered Arnold told reporters that one of the objects quivered like "a saucer skipping over water." For the next 45 years (and possibly as far back as 4000 B.C., Thompson insists), UFOs have provided both a wellspring of crackpottery for fringe science buffs and a few occasions of genuinely mysterious moving lights overhead.

Thompson is most effective when recounting sightings without extrapolation, although he's painfully reluctant to call anyone a liar, no matter the size of the howler. His terse, level-headed reporter's voice is a welcome antidote to the panting hyperbole of UFO books, and the metaphysical claims of the true believers in *Angels and Aliens* are so bizarrely imaginative that Thompson is wise not to dress them up. He's managed to boil a field brimming with cranks, debunkers and conjecture down to a few controversies and theories and plucks the best and brightest abductions, hoaxes and sightings from the latrine-ditch of saucer lore.

All the greats are here, from the Roswell, N.M., "saucer crash" in 1947—only days after Arnold's sighting!—to *Communion*, Whitley Strieber's 1986 "non-fiction" best seller that examined the author's abduction by *Close Encounters* doubles. In between are "luminous egg-shaped

objects" that kidnap people from their beds in the dead of night, mysterious cattle mutilations and conspiracy-laden rantings by "ufologists" that would embarrass Oliver Stone. (Thompson passes over the much-publicized recent "crop circles" in favor of UFOs in antiquity, pointing out that weird lights in the sky have been seen throughout history, from soaring "earthenware vessels" over medieval Japan to the 19th-century "airship mystery" in the U.S.)

Thompson flirts with sociology—once nicely, but all-too-briefly speculating that UFO paranoia might have been fueled by McCarthyism—but his pro-UFO bias leads him to either couch his skepticism in gentle terms or fly to slippery, grandiose lyricism.

He also proves his smarts, only to dash his investigative instincts on the rocks of credulity. Modern UFO encounters have grown wilder with each ensuing rash of sightings, and Thompson, to his credit, admits that this is the result of the public's thirst for newer, more remarkable myths. He understands that silence equals death for "ufologists." Thompson notes that it became harder to laugh off UFOs after a 1952 flap in which the government put Air Force pilots on nationwide alert to shoot down flying saucers that refused to land. The order came after radar and eyewitness UFO sightings in Washing-

**The author's generally level-headed approach is a welcome antidote to the panting hyperbole of other UFO books.**

ton, D.C. The UFO debate, he writes, had "reached its first real turning point, with a recognizable plot focused around recognizable conflicts in place."

**Flight of fancy:** A turning point, maybe—but also a dead end. The only deliverance would be a new wrinkle, which was provided when the first abductee claimant, George Adamski, appeared in 1952. Though Adamski was a nut—he claimed to have made contact after going into the California desert for the expressed purpose of meeting aliens—Thompson sees the era he ushered in as nothing short of epic: "Just as Homer expanded and enriched the *Odyssey* by permitting his hero, Ulysses, to wander successfully into new and significant regions, the ever-widening plot of the UFO epic was about to encompass a new adventure of events and images whose very appearance on the scene would beg the major questions of the existing debate, opening provocative new dilemmas at the same time."

This is the kind of mythological flight of fancy that mars *Angels and Aliens*. In recounting the nuts and bolts of Adamski's adventure and the magnitude of the 1952 flap, Thompson has his feet on the ground: The prose is neat and uninspiring—not a liability—and the "epic" he unfolds is breezy and entertaining. Suddenly, the urge for Greater Understanding stirs the author—the "myth" in *Mythic*—and he cites Homer.

And that's only the beginning. Soon his search for metaphysical personification initiates a roll-call of Greek gods who have been toying with our perceptions for centuries: Proteus, "the shape-shifter"; Hermes, "fleet-footed messenger of the gods"; and Dionysus, who reveals himself through masks. (Thrown in for good measure is the multicultural Trickster, who's been duping humanity through the ages.)

Thompson awkwardly insists that these allegorical figures "have been shaping our plot ... at the periphery of the stage," and that "[m]yth offers a background of images through which the UFO phenomenon might gain the deeper, richer, wider volume to which its events so consistently aspire." Thompson predictably ends the chapter with a quote from Joseph Campbell.

There is a precedent for this. As Thompson notes, Carl Jung was a great UFO enthusiast, and even wrote a book about them, 1959's *Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Sky*. Thompson cites a letter Jung wrote claiming that "saucers might even be ... rumor as well as fact," and goes on to write that Jung understood that "large-scale anomalies typically arise when wholesale changes are underway in the forces in the collective unconscious," which Thompson describes as "that vast repository of images and motifs common to the myths and dreams of peoples throughout the world, all connected as a complex matrix transcending time and space."

**Just the facts:** This is all a bit much, regardless of how brilliant a philosopher Jung was. After all, Thompson is describing a phenomenon that, according to skeptics such as Phillip Klass (a major antagonist in *Angels and Aliens*) is 100 percent accountable—either people are seeing natural phenomena, man-made objects, or, well, they're lying.

But even if sightings can be reduced to natural phenomena or lies—which I find impossible—Thompson had his finger on a ready-made passion play that's been waiting almost 50 years for a competent scribe. Abductees and debunkers have formed a volatile, often amusing subculture, and their ongoing fracas offers more drama than many journalists sniff out in a lifetime. Thompson reports that when Whitley Strieber met Kathy Davis, a character in Budd Hopkins' abduction book *Intruders*, he informed her that he had seen her disembodied head on a shelf inside a UFO. With material like this, who needs Proteus?

That's the infuriating irony of *Angels and Aliens*. If the author had stuck to recounting the experiences and buffooneries of both witnesses and government experts, it would have been a convincing and down-to-earth sociological study that described the process Jung anticipated—modern myth in the making. Unfortunately, *Angels and Aliens* is part treatise on quasi-religious revelation as piloted by Greece. Like many UFO witnesses, Thompson should have just stuck to the story. Some of the sightings are genuine curiosities, and all the swamp gas in the world won't change that. ■

**Mark G. Judge** was recently abducted by aliens who told him to vote for Jerry Brown.



**Feminism without Illusions:  
A Critique of Individualism**  
By Elizabeth Fox-Genovese  
University of North Carolina Press  
347 pp., \$12.95

By Allan Kulikoff

# Is individualism the wrong way to go?

**W**ITH THE COLLAPSE OF centrally planned socialist economies and the failure of market-driven fiscal policies in the U.S., renewed examination of the ideological grounds of social policy has become an urgent task. During the '80s, libertarians, who (in the name of conservatism) argued that our prob-

## SOCIAL POLICY

lems would disappear if the individual citizen was liberated from the fetters of state intervention, have only succeeded in crippling the banking system, beggaring millions of people and bringing the government to the brink of bankruptcy.

Yet these same right-wingers now claim that world events have proven the superiority of free-market capitalism—and, judging by the mainstream media's accounts, a startling number of people agree with them. The popularity of libertarians' positions points to the political effectiveness of their ideology, which, however flawed, has at least a coherent foundation in individualism, an ideal to which a great majority of Americans unquestioningly adhere.

If democrats and socialists are to counter this ideology successfully, we must move beyond ad hoc solutions to economic problems and toward a coherent ideology—one that justifies social policy as a whole and reflects the aspirations of our citizens. *Feminism without Illusions*, a new book of essays by Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, goes far beyond women's issues to suggest a new basis for social policy. It is essential reading for anyone seeking new ways to revitalize democratic socialism.

**Me first:** Fox-Genovese begins with a critique of individualism. She defines individualism as "the theory of human nature and rights, according to which, rights, including political sovereignty, are grounded in the individual and can only be infringed upon by the state in extraordinary circumstances." In a society in which individualism predominates, communities grow out of individual needs and individual self-interest, as citizens form voluntary associations or contract with each other to sustain themselves and their families.

Individualism was essential in the spread of equal rights to the dispossessed. Feminism, for example, began with an assertion that women, too, were created equal and deserved all the civil and political rights granted to men. As old hierarchies dissolved in the 18th and 19th centuries, this individualist ideology and language provided women (and workers and blacks) with their best opportunity to achieve full citizenship. Individualism continues to dominate con-



temporary feminism, justifying affirmative action, abortion rights and many other issues on the feminist agenda.

Individualism, however, has outlived its usefulness, Fox-Genovese contends. With logic equal to that of feminists, those opposed to feminism use individualist language to buttress their positions. Working from individualist assumptions leads feminists to expect that women will freely come together, forming themselves into a discrete class, at once equal to men but profoundly different in culture from them. To presume that all women share a common economic identity, however, is simply wrong. Women define themselves in many ways—forming, for instance, anti-feminist organizations as readily as feminist ones.

Affirmative action and the battle over abortion show, Fox-Genovese argues, how individualism obstructs policies the left supports. Rather than arguing that groups deserve equitable representation within the

workplace, many feminists have insisted that individual members of groups should have equal access to jobs. Under current law, plaintiffs usually sustain class-action suits only by proving discrimination against particular women. In successful discrimination cases, the work tends to require very specific credentials. Upper-middle-class professional women can meet this standard. But working-class women have less recourse—as the government's failure to prove that Sears discriminated against women in general for high-paying commission sales positions attests. No wonder working-class women (the majority, if one includes clerical and sales workers) have historically resented ideologies favoring the individual needs of their wealthier counterparts.

While Fox-Genovese supports abortion rights (for the first trimester, when the vast majority of abortions occur), she regrets both the individualistic rhetoric of the abor-

tion-rights movement and the overwhelming emphasis placed upon this issue, at the expense of other parts of the feminist agenda. Both pro- and anti-abortion ideologies draw on individualism, disagreeing only upon whether to consider the woman or the fetus as the individual worthy of protection.

Fox-Genovese urges that reproductive rights be derived instead from community needs. Using individualist premises, many reproductive-rights advocates argue that it is unfair to force a woman to bear children against her will, especially if she has no access to contraceptive devices. But a more community-minded pro-choice stance would insist that the future of the society would be damaged by leaving a woman alone with a child for 18 years without medical care, day care, safe housing and a clean environment.

**A new corporatism:** We might overcome some of the problems inherent in individualism, Fox-Geno-

**In *Feminism without Illusions*, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese argues that, while individualism helped the spread of rights for the dispossessed, it has outlived its usefulness.**

vese contends, if we imagine "the claims of society—the collectivity—as prior to the rights of the individual, ... protecting the rights of the individual as social, not private, rights." Before the transition from feudalism to capitalism was complete, rights did flow from social need. She calls these older forms of community life corporatism—the belief that individuals gain political identity and political rights from the community. This belief sustained medieval guilds, feudal manors, the universal Catholic Church and big slave plantations, until capitalism destroyed all forms of corporatism. Fox-Genovese seeks the creation of corporatist societies that are organized democratically rather than hierarchically, with the authority to enforce laws made for the public good.

Although *Feminism without Illusions* suggests a new foundation for social policy, it does not specify a political program based upon the theory it presents. One wishes that Fox-Genovese had sketched such an agenda, for policies that might build democratic communities are hardly self-evident. Fox-Genovese does insist, however, that one critical goal of corporatist communities should be to sustain families in nurturing children. Individual rights in the marketplace mean nothing if families remain ill-housed, ill-fed and unable

to pay for medical care. Free, universal medical care, communally financed day-care centers and family allowances would obviously be part of any family-based social policy. Moreover, affirmative action, which is subject to attack by individualists, can be fully justified as a means of sustaining families. Since families require an income adequate to raise children, all groups, however defined (by gender, ethnicity, race, social class), should have equal access to all kinds of employment as groups.

In Fox-Genovese's ideal society, family needs would limit individual rights but at the same time sustain them. Fox-Genovese does not lay out family policy, but one can guess that such a policy might include censorship of pornography, regulation of overly sexual advertising and dissemination of birth-control information in schools. By allowing children (and adults) to explore Western (and Third World) cultures in an environment safe from violence and sexual coercion, such a structured community of families would provide an ideal environment to nurture art, music and literature.

**Tough questions:** It is, however, difficult to find communities in which individual rights grow out of communal needs anywhere in the Western world. Coercion would pose a continual threat to any such community. Who in the society decides public policies? What prevents the wealthy or those with greatest access to public media from setting the agenda? Given great differences between social classes (and between women of different classes), how can community members reach a consensus sufficient to allow democratic decision-making? How can such rights as free speech be transferred from individuals to communities or social classes? How are minority rights protected?

Fox-Genovese has in other places recounted the sorry behavior of great slaveholders who justified hierarchy as communal paternalism, but abandoned their social responsibilities in practice whenever the welfare of their own families was at risk. Contemporary history is full of examples from the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China of the suppression of individual rights in the name of the society, the state or the party.

Individualism, moreover, has been central to our entire political history. Its images and words are so pervasive and so unconsciously repeated—that we must incorporate them into any new social contract. Only by reshaping the language of individualism, sustaining individuality within communities, can we begin to build a new society from the rubble of selfishness and greed. Fox-Genovese has not considered, much less resolved, these intractable issues. But she has given us tools with which to begin.

**Allan Kulikoff** is a professor of history at Northern Illinois University, where he teaches a course on "Women, Family and the State."

IN THESE TIMES APRIL 8-14, 1992 19





## New York Times—the newspaper of abysmal record on feminism

**The Girls in the Balcony: Women, Men, and The New York Times**

By Nan Robertson  
Random House, 274 pp., \$22.00

By Eleanor J. Bader

**S**URPRISE: THE NEWSPAPER THAT publishes "all the news that's fit to print" is run by chauvinistic white men. That's right, the guys who run the *New York Times* are sexist.

While the premise of *The Girls in the Balcony* is hardly earth-shattering, this is an insider's report, journalism of the best name-naming and finger-pointing tradition. Nan Robertson, a longtime reporter for the *Times*, has written an engaging, enraging and inspiring book on the time-honored misogyny and patronizing attitudes that permeate the newspaper of record. From Adolph Ochs, the first man in a family dynasty that has controlled the paper for nearly a century, to Arthur Ochs Sulzberger Jr., the current

publisher, the men in charge are exposed, denounced and occasionally praised.

But it is the women who are trumpeted—from Anne McCormick, the first female to win a Pulitzer Prize for the paper, to Betsy Wade Boylan, the named-plaintiff in a class-action lawsuit that challenged the paper's sexism-as-usual.

**A spirit for suffragism:** In language resembling a chatty conver-

**Times reporter Nan Robertson explores time-honored misogyny at a place where women are still referred to as "adornments."**

sation, Robertson introduces the reader to a plethora of spunky women, including a six-foot-two-

inch "apparition garbed in rough Irish tweeds and shod in thick-soled brogues." Using a liberal dose of writer's license, Robertson invents the scene in which this "apparition" entered the *Times*' inner sanctum. "A whiff of the stables perfumed the air. A deep, melodious voice with an Irish lilt said, 'I am Maria Morgan. I want a job.'"

In 1869, Morgan, known as Midy, became the first woman reporter in the city room. Unfortunately, she was seen as an anomaly—a physically imposing, tough-as-nails reporter who thought and wrote "like a man." Nonetheless, her presence rankled more than a few of the good old boys, including Adolph Ochs, the patriarch who would in 1896 become the paper's publisher.

Ochs' takeover, says Robertson, ushered in a "Dark Age for women," since he believed "women belonged at home and certainly not on a newspaper; he fought personally and in his editorials against women's right to vote. ... During the four decades that Adolph Ochs held sway, only

four women worked as reporters in the *Times* city room. The first two specialized in women's news, such as conventions, society, clubs and fashion shows." The other two started off covering the suffrage movement—"until the movement became front-page material and male reporters were assigned to write the stories."

Even during World War II, a period in which most newspapers hired dozens of "Rosie reporters," the *Times* held fast. "Nobody who entered the city room of the *Times* during the war years could doubt for a second that it was a man's world," Robertson writes. "There were spittoons everywhere on the floor in a filthy litter of cigars and cigarettes and crumpled papers."

**The boys' club:** Robertson's own tenure at the *Times*, beginning in the mid-'50s, is presented in detail. James "Scotty" Reston, Daniel Clifton and Gay Talese become more than names in a history text; they are presented through wonderful anecdotes as the charming, complicated and sexist men they were. Perhaps most astounding, however, are Robertson's recollections of events at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

Despite the fact that the club was the site of countless addresses by presidents and prime ministers, women reporters were "not allowed even to set foot inside. The women protested that they didn't want to be members—all they wanted was equal access to the news. They were not believed. The State Department colluded in the arrangement. It continued to route foreign chiefs of state and other high government officials to the club. And then, in 1955, after years of pressure from the Women's National Press Club, the men thought of a solution. They would put the women reporters in the balcony of the ballroom. Of course, they would get nothing to eat during the speeches, which were usually delivered at lunch. And there would be no place to sit up there—it was too narrow for chairs if there was any kind of a crowd. But, by God, no woman would be able to say that the club didn't let her in to cover the assignment."

Robertson's descriptions of the club's "cattle car" atmosphere are shocking, infuriating. But the focus of the book, despite forays into such places, is on the *Times* alone. She traces shifts in attitudes and policies, including those brought about by movements for social change in the '60s and '70s that resulted in the hiring of a small number of visibly powerful women including Charlotte Curtis, the first woman to be listed on the *Times*' masthead—Robertson calls her "the bride of the *New York Times*... She was never off duty"—and Ada Louise Huxtable, the first full-time architecture critic on an American newspaper.

**Taking action:** By the early '70s, however, the "chicks from the newsroom" discovered that there were only 500 to 600 women working at

the paper out of a total workforce of 6,000, including cleaning people, secretaries, classified ad takers and reporters. Furthermore, they learned that the "average salary of male *Times* reporters was \$59 a week higher than the average salary of women reporters. They also found that 23 percent of the women were working at the minimum union salary for reporters, while only 6.8 percent of the men were working for the minimum salary."

A five-page letter was sent by the Women's Caucus to Abe Rosenthal, then managing editor. His response: "a wounded 'How could you do this to me?' He said, 'Why didn't you tell me you felt this way? The men come to me and tell me everything.'" Discussion followed discussion. Flora Lewis was hired to head the Paris bureau. Still, nothing changed for the majority of women at the *Times*.

By early 1973, the caucus decided to hire a lawyer and fight back in earnest. *Boylan vs. the New York Times* was filed and charged the paper with systematic and pervasive discrimination against women. Finally, in 1978, without ever going to trial, the lawsuit was settled. The *Times* agreed to pay the 550 women involved in the "class" a piddling \$233,500 in back pay (women with more than 20 years at the paper got the most—\$1,000 each), and put in place an affirmative action plan that promised to place significant numbers of women in every level of every department, including one woman for every four male executive and managing editors, and on the foreign, national and metropolitan desks.

By 1991, one-third of the copy editors were women, as were 27 percent of the photographers and photo editors, 30 percent of the graphic arts and layout staff, and 23 percent of the reporters and critics. Still, Robertson reports that when Carolyn Lee, the first woman assignment managing editor, was introduced at a staff retreat by Executive Editor Max Frankel, she was called "the latest adornment to the paper's masthead."

Shocking? Obnoxious? Grotesque? All of the above? Or, perhaps, exactly what one would expect?

While Robertson gives the *Times* a thorough drubbing for its continuing mistreatment of women, she casts a far less scrutinizing net over the other "isms" in which the paper is mired: racism, classism and heterosexism.

This makes *The Girls in the Balcony* less exacting and probing than it might have been, perpetuating a mainstream movement tendency to push the case for white, middle-class women's "equal opportunity" at the expense of a more inclusive politics. Nevertheless, Robertson has unmasked a variety of evils and evil-doers. In so doing, she has written an explosive, colorful and pointed exposé that cuts to the bone of media mythology.

Eleanor J. Bader is a writer living in New York.





## Basic Instinct

Directed by Paul Verhoeven

By Elizabeth Haas

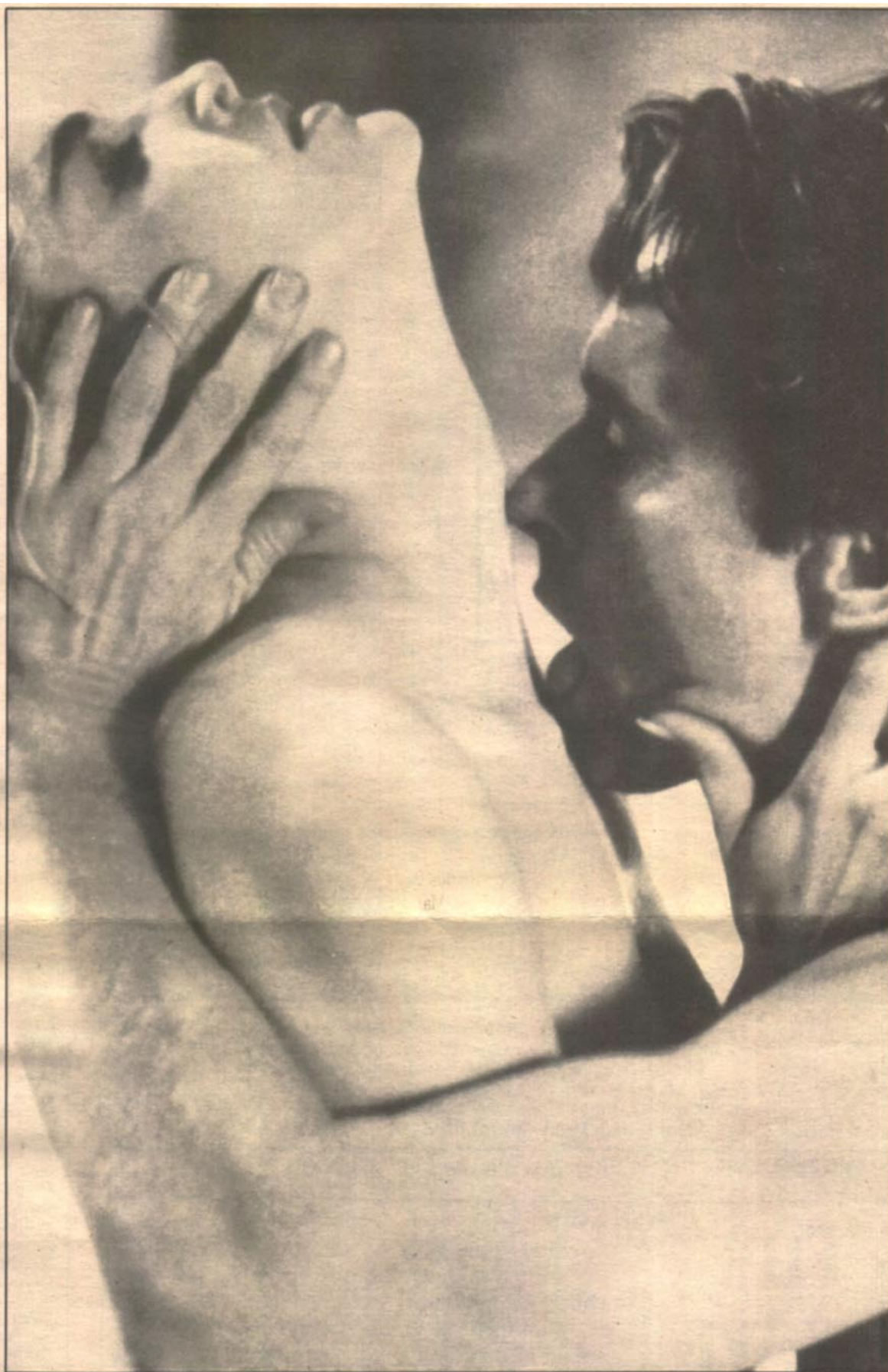
**B**ASIC INSTINCT'S DIRECTOR, Paul Verhoeven, makes his intentions clear in the movie's opening shot: naked man and naked woman having sex beneath a ceiling mirror. As the camera comes closer to the writhing, moaning couple, we realize our original view of the scene was upside down. All the way through to the very last shot, *Basic Instinct* is out to turn all assumptions on their heads, undermine characters we come to trust, titillate our voyeurism with the taboo. At least on the surface that's what this would-be Hitchcockian film would like to do.

**Sick, but not from *Vertigo*:** In that mirrored bedroom, moans quickly turn to anguished cries, and the straight-on sex scene becomes a murder, as the woman ties her lover's wrists to the bedposts and then repeatedly stabs him with a physical abandon not so different from her gymnastic sex performance. (Brutal homicide as entertainment isn't a new idea, of course, and *Basic Instinct* neither shies away from nor improves on this Hollywood trend.)

The prime suspect is the beautiful but icy blonde heiress, Catherine Tramell (Sharon Stone), whose thriller novels happen to come true. The film's MacGuffin—a Hitchcock term for a movie's ostensible central plot device—lies in these dilemmas: Is Catherine the murderer whose fiction gives her an alibi by its obvious parallel to the real crime, or is someone framing her? Is she researching material for a new book or plotting her next murder as she lures the unstable detective on the case into her web?

This MacGuffin is not all that reminds one of Hitchcock. Beneath the veneer of dark lighting alternated with shots of the dramatic California coastline lies a much simpler film than its obvious influence, *Vertigo*. That film's Jimmy Stewart role, a former policeman obsessed with a woman of his own illusions, finds a much less sympathetic and thus less interesting *Basic Instinct* counterpart in Michael Douglas' Nick Curran. It's a part that returns Douglas to the streets of San Francisco as, what else, the detective investigating Tramell. (Pull Sharon Stone's bleach blonde strands into a twist, put her into a straight-lined white dress, as Verhoeven does, and you've got *Vertigo*'s Kim Novak.) As in Hitchcock, the dilemma of Catherine's guilt soon matters only because the more Nick's convinced of her deadly ways, the more he desires her.

**The ripper and the jack-off:** What's at stake in this film is not so simple as female characters being depicted only as man's nemesis—



Michael Douglas' latest fatal attraction is Sharon Stone, who plays a writer linked to a series of murders.

## She's gotta stab it

even the woman who enjoys sex as an act of love is accused of wanting to...distaste shown by man delivering the line..."mate for life." It isn't just that lesbianism is portrayed only as a fashion accessory. This movie uses these characterizations solely to stimulate male libido. It's a turn-on to Nick that Catherine is both bisexual and possibly an ice-pick killer.

Her relationship with the black-leather-clad Roxy (Leilani Sarelle) serves no purpose other than to arouse Nick and cast suspicion on Catherine. If she has a thing for women and can bluntly state she misses

the victim not because she loved him but because she liked having

### CINEMA

sex with him, then she must be guilty. For Nick, the guiltier the better.

**In this film, every woman's basic instinct is to kill men.**

But violence and eroticism are not unique to Hollywood. What's different here is the degree to which the sex act mirrors literally the act of murder. Homicidal behavior is as natural as the sex drive—but with a catch.

If we listen to scriptwriter Joe Eszterhas, reportedly paid \$3 million for his work, we would believe that every woman's basic instinct is to kill men. The movie reveals that in her past, one female character carved up her two younger brothers, whose bloody bodies are shown in close-ups on the crime photos—high on the list for *Instinct*'s most

gratuitous moment. Another mysterious friend of Catherine's turns out to have murdered her husband and children "on impulse, she didn't know why." And Roxy's ominous presence is motivated by her sexuality alone; we never see enough of her to assume otherwise.

We come to doubt yet another character only when her possible lesbian orientation is revealed—a revelation important only because she was also once Nick's lover. (Right after the evidence of the character's lesbianism is presented, the woman seated behind me said, "Now he doesn't know who to trust." Poor Nick.) The message is clear: Women are out to get men in every conceivable way.

Though *Basic Instinct* would have you believe that Nick is as dark a character as Catherine, we never see him as anything other than a good buddy to the wise-cracking street cowboy Gus (George Dzundza), the film's only comic relief. Nick's on the wagon from his former vices (coke and booze) and, though he probably did kill a few innocent tourists, the film takes this seriously only in the way Catherine manipulates Nick's feelings of guilt. The film's most neglected character, Nick's police-shrink lover Beth Garner (well portrayed by Jeanne Tripplehorn) commits the crime of trying to love Nick, pleading, "Don't shut me out. I deserve better."

**Gynephobia:** This film most successfully reflects how conflicted men are about women in this post-feminist age. Both Catherine and Beth not only don't bake cookies but took degrees in, gasp, psychology, just so they could toy with men, get inside their heads as well as their beds. When these women can't be trusted to play their assigned roles of devoted housewives, what's a guy to do? Who can you trust when even the Botticelli angel Sharon Stone might be the devil?

The answer appears to be this: Make a film that fully employs male control over women through the camera. The male gaze here not only fetishizes women's bodies—the main female characters all have beautiful breasts and one villain even gets shot there—it turns them horrific.

In the most emblematic scene, Catherine spreads her legs and flashes a room of interrogating policemen. The woman behind me screamed at the sight, and one of the detectives breaks into a sweat as he stares both lustfully and fearfully. A few shots later, legs crossed, Catherine flicks her lighter and holds it directly above her crotch, saying, "Let the world be warned." Though the character is referring specifically to her habit of befriending and then using people as material for her books, the film's gynephobic warning is more ominous. ■

Elizabeth Haas is a writer living in Ann Arbor, Mich.



## The Adventures of a Huge Mouth, by Peter Hannan

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### May 2

"Toward a New U.S. Foreign Policy: Promoting Democracy and Social Justice," at the New School for Social Research, 65 Fifth Ave., New York City. 9:30 a.m. plenary: "Is There Hope for U.S. Foreign Policy?" with Edward Said, U.S. Rep. Major Owens, Holly Burkhalter, Joanne Landy, Christopher Hitchens. 2 p.m. plenary: "A New Economic Order? Free Trade, Free Markets, and Democracy" with Adolfo Aguilar, Harley Shaiken, Kristin Dawkins, Maude Barlow, plus workshops with speakers from East Europe, Algeria, Canada, Puerto Rico. Admission free. Public invited on first-come, first-served basis. To reserve place, call CPD at (212) 666-5924, or write POB 1640, Cathedral Sta., NYC 10025.

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### CHICAGO

April 5

Hear Lu Palmer at 10:00 a.m. and Aaron Freeman at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday at the 3rd Unitarian Church, Mayfield and Fulton. (312) 626-9385 or (708) 848-2750. Free admission.

### April 22

The Chicago Chapter of the National Organization for Women's Health and Safety Committee presents a program meeting, "EMPOWERING WOMEN AGAINST RAPE." The program will address public issues of sexual violence against women and will include a demonstration of self-defense techniques. Begins at 6:00 p.m. at the Metropolitan YWCA, 180 N. Wabash, 3rd floor.

### May 1

34th ANNUAL DEBS-THOMAS-HARRINGTON DINNER honoring Sue Purrington, Executive Director of Chicago NOW, and Dr. Quentin Young, President of Physicians for a National Health Program. Featured speaker, Jose LaLuz, National Political Education Director, Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union: "Beyond Free Trade: Building North American Labor Solidarity." Friday, May 1, at the Congress Hotel, 520 S. Michigan Ave. Cocktails: 6:00 p.m., Dinner: 7:00 p.m. Tickets \$35 by April 27th. A limited number of tickets available at the door for \$40. Contact Chicago DSA, 1608 N. Milwaukee, Chicago, IL 60647, (312) 973-6714.

### WASHINGTON, DC

May 1

A May Day lecture by Paul Sweezy, co-editor, *Monthly Review*, on "Recession and Depression." Friday, May 1, 1992, 8:00 p.m. University of District of Columbia, 4200 Connecticut Ave., N.W. (Van Ness stop Red Line). Room 204, Science and Technology Bldg. Donations requested. Washington Friends of *Monthly Review*. (301) 495-9649.

### NATIONWIDE

April 20-May 2

CISPES TOUR - MARIA SERRANO

**Washington, DC:** Monday, April 20—"Building the Democratic Revolution in El Salvador," CISPES Tour of FMLN Leader Maria Serrano. 7:00 p.m., Calvary United Methodist Church, 1459 Columbia Rd., NW, Washington, DC. Suggested donation \$5-\$10. For information, call (202) 232-5667.

**New York City:** Thursday, April 23—"Building the Democratic Revolution in El Salvador," CISPES Tour of FMLN Leader Maria Serrano. 7:00 p.m., Public School #41, 116 W. 11th St. (west of 6th Ave.), Manhattan. Suggested donation \$5. For information, call (212) 645-5230.

**Boston:** Saturday, April 25—"Building the Democratic Revolution in El Salvador," CISPES Tour of FMLN Leader Maria Serrano. 5:30 p.m., African Meeting House, 46 Joy St., Beacon Hill, Boston. Donation \$10. For information, call (617) 524-1166.

**Detroit:** Sunday, April 26—"Building the Democratic Revolution in El Salvador," CISPES Tour of FMLN Leader Maria Serrano. 2:00 p.m., Gesu Church, 17204 Oak Drive, Detroit. Donation. For information, call (313) 259-1188.

**Chicago:** Tuesday, April 28—"Building the Democratic Revolution in El Salvador," CISPES Tour of FMLN Leader Maria Serrano. 7:30 p.m., DePaul University, Schmitt Academic Center, room 154, 2323 N. Seminary Ave., Chicago. Donation. For information, call (312) 227-2720.

**Minneapolis:** Wednesday, April 29—"Building the Democratic Revolution in El Salvador," CISPES Tour of FMLN Leader Maria Serrano. 7:00 p.m., Newman Center, 1701 University Ave. SE, Minneapolis. Donation. For information, call (612) 627-9840.

**Seattle:** Thursday, April 30—"Building the Democratic Revolution in El Salvador," CISPES Tour of FMLN Leader Maria Serrano. 8:00 p.m., University Baptist Church, 4554 12th NE (at NE 47th). Donation \$5. For information, call (206) 325-5494.

**Bay Area:** Friday, May 1—"Building the Democratic Revolution in El Salvador," CISPES Tour of FMLN Leader Maria Serrano. 7:00 p.m., UC-Berkeley Campus, Physical Science Laboratories Auditorium (circular red-brick building past Campanile Clock Tower), Berkeley. Donation. For information, call (415) 648-8222.

**Los Angeles:** Saturday, May 2—"Building the Democratic Revolution in El Salvador," CISPES Tour of FMLN Leader Maria Serrano. 7:00 p.m., Fairfax High School Auditorium, 7850 Melrose (Fairfax and Melrose), Los Angeles. Donation \$8 in advance, \$10 at door, \$5 low income. For information, call (213) 852-0721.

CISPES TOUR - CARMEN MORALES

**New Haven, CT:** Tuesday, April 21—"CISPES Tour of Carmen Morales, Representing Women of El Salvador's FMLN. 6:00 p.m., New Haven Foundation, 70 Audubon St., New Haven. Donation \$5. For information, call (203) 865-4706.

**Philadelphia:** Wednesday, April 29—"CISPES Tour of Carmen Morales, Representing Women of El Salvador's FMLN. 7:00 p.m., University of Pennsylvania, Houston Hall, Smith-Peniman Room, 3417 Spruce St., Philadelphia. Donation. For information, call (215) 386-4711.



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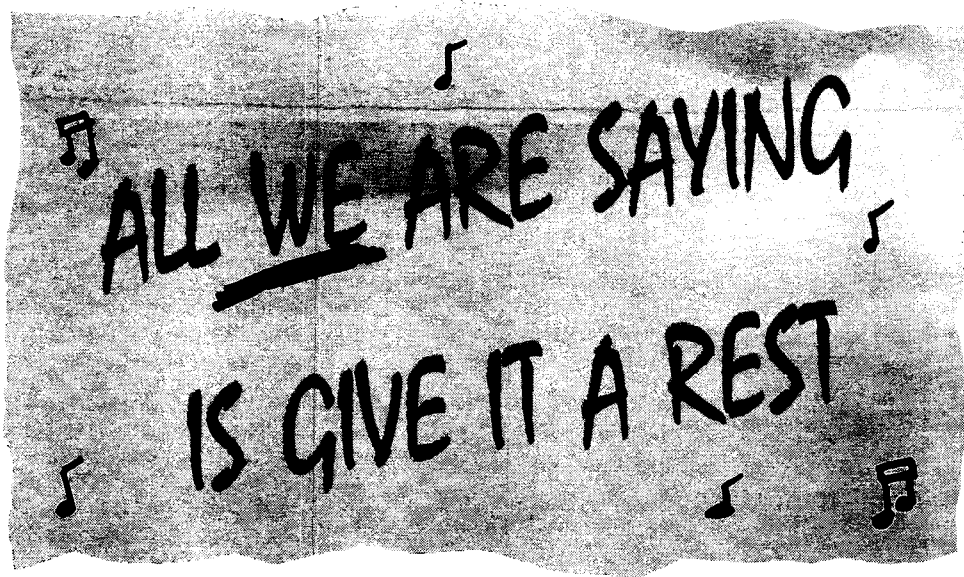
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By Lisa Grayson

**A**ll of you fortyish pundits who presume to speak for the postwar generation, listen up. Yes, that means you, Mr. Travis Charbeneau ("The Future Boom," *ITT*, March 18). I am tired of hearing how the '60s represented the flower of the "baby boom"—my generation. I am tired of being expected to listen with rapt fascination as aging stockbrokers recall their glory years during the Johnson administration. I am tired of your '60s, and I wish you graybeards would say a final love bead novena and get on with it.

According to TC, the "promising *Sturm und Drang* of the '60s" supposedly defines those of us born 1946-1964. Sure, storm and stress aplenty for Travis and his friends—but not for those of us born after 1954. My '60s angst? An unending struggle over who would have to play Commissioner Gordon from "Batman" and who would get to be The Riddler. (My brother Richard, destined to be Robin every time, remains scarred to this day.) The assassination of John F. Kennedy marked an interruption during Fun with Clay in Mrs. Hanauer's second-grade class. My big political activity in the summer of 1968 was going to Mass with my mother at St. Boniface Church in Milwaukee, Father James Groppi presiding.

And to baby boomers born in the '60s, I'm an old fart simply because I remember it all.

Now I respect Mr. Charbeneau as a sort of elder statesman of his generation, the Averell Harriman of the groovy set. But his '60s were not my '60s, his

"transindustrial" anxieties are not necessarily shared by those of us born in the Eisenhower and Kennedy years, and his political desuetude is his own.

Our '60s? Police curfews, sure. But also Expo 67, Billie Jean King, "Laugh-In," Vince Lombardi, Mary Poppins, "Gilligan's Island," troll dolls, Hot Wheels, the Monkees, Flipper, Sonny and Cher, Creepy Crawlers, Walter Cronkite, Nancy Sinatra, Ronald McDonald and Monty Hall. That's what we see in our collective rear-view mirror in the Changemobile, Travis—above the furry dice and Mr. T air freshener. Not quite what you had in mind for a second-shift "transindustrial" driver? Well, while my headlights are in your eyes, let me tell you something about your younger brothers and sisters.

**The transcendence of TV:** Our critical years had us running home to watch the Watergate hearings after our high-school graduation parties. Then came Whip Inflation Now buttons, "Saturday Night Live," *Saturday Night Fever*, the taking of American hostages in Lebanon, the onset of the Reagan years. Are we transindustrial too? Maybe. But we learned about computers in school—and remain less intimidated by them, perhaps because of all those hours spent amusing ourselves in front of other cathode rays.

Our older siblings with liberal arts degrees could find real jobs; entering college in the recessionary mid- to late '70s, we were encouraged to be practical. Foreign languages were not cultural niceties but business skills. We aren't nearly as shocked as you older guys

about "a multipolar world" in which "America can no longer call the shots." It was already being born before we took our SATs.

Imagine, then, how we children of the disco generation react when we read that the '60s were "roughly the last time America produced very much in the way of original thinking in social policy and elsewhere." Come on! *Roe vs. Wade*! Equal pay for equal work! Affirmative action! Gay rights! All came to fruition after the '60s. The entire ecological crusade that allegedly started on Earth Day 1970 (whither John Muir?) didn't take off in its contemporary form until the late years of the Reagan administration. The sanctuary movement. The proliferation of small presses. Multiculturalism. Not to mention personal computers and cable TV. Granted, the quality of macramé plant hangers declined sharply after George Wallace was shot—but has no original thought emerged since Charbeneau's friends lost their virginity? I think not.

So I shudder at the prospect of a "boomer administration" celebrating "the 'anything's possible' *Zeitgeist* we grew up with during the '60s." How many NEA-funded early Dylan retrospectives does anyone need? But wait—are there many Vietnam veterans yearning to recapture the spirit of the '60s? Many fortyish black working-class parents musing about the psychedelic *Weltanschauung*? Any non-white, non-college-educated, or non-middle/upper-class old "baby boomers" fondly remembering those years of war and riots? No, it's just the navel-gazing children of privilege, poring over their Williams-Sonoma catalogs, wistfully recalling thick hair and collegiate potency. A postwar generation "arrogant" and "complacent"? Speak for yourselves!

But maybe Americans do tend to act out politically the ethos in which they were raised. Then woe unto the Bong and Shuffleboard Club at Jerry Garcia's Bide-a-Wee Golden Acres when those of us born after 1955 come to political power.

**Much more than a hunch:** Last year, a Florida police officer pleaded guilty to battery charges: He lined up 14 juvenile skateboarders and whacked their butts as he sang the theme from "The Brady Bunch." Odds are he was one of my

comrades from the class of 1974. Mr. Charbeneau may claim the inheritance of psychedelia, but we later baby boomers had something more amorphous, more powerful: television. The assassinations of both Kennedys and King were our "Sesame Street." We ate Swanson's dinners in front of body counts. Selma might as well have been one of Endora's sisters on "Bewitched"; the outside world came through one source, and all we had to do was turn it on.

What kind of ethos, then, will come from us? The majority of the postwar generation, those too young to be drafted into the Vietnam War? War sucks, but it makes riveting TV. Charbeneau thinks his generation exposed the crumbling timbers of imperial rot. My Watergate-weaned friends and I shrug and say, "Yeah, it's rotten, so who couldn't figure that out?" The good thing is, we stay forever young—because our self-absorbed predecessors continue to reflect the world through their own experience, and no matter what else happens, we'll always have fewer wrinkles than they.

But it does get tiresome, thinking of one's entire generation as the perpetual younger sibling of another. Being asked to define ourselves in terms of events we don't care about or even remember. After 40 years of hearing you complain about how apathetic we are, how we just don't understand the big issues you claim to have spent your youth on (yeah, right, like all political struggle suddenly ended when you stopped doing much about it), we might just get fed up and ask you: who's still paying for your Zapruder Film Festival Bingo Nights.

**Give peace a chance:** Well, guys, I suggest a truce. We'll let you display your scar from that 1968 Chicago billy club if you stop whining about how nobody cares about things the way they did in the '60s. You can publish your exegesis on The Woodstock Years if you'll allow that culture didn't die with Janis Joplin. You can even hold forth on the enormity of your decline into minoxidil and bifocals if you'll remember one thing: You cannot speak for the postwar generation. And there are more of us than there are of you. So don't turn around—someone might be gaining on you. ■

Lisa Grayson, editor of the satirical monthly *The Planet* and an editor of *Primavera*, turned 35 last weekend.

Boom or bust: Not all postwar kiddies are alike! Here, a guide to some basic cultural differences in the baby boom cohort.

#### shibboleth

Peter....  
Galvanizing college political action  
Animal  
Stooge  
College major  
Favorite drug, early years  
Favorite drug, now  
John F. Kennedy was...  
Jerry...  
Patty...  
David...  
George...  
Julius...  
Andrei...  
I know all the words to...  
Favorite topological feature

#### born 1946-1953

Fonda  
Storming the administration building  
Pig  
Moe  
Sociology  
Grass  
Metamucil  
the victim of a conspiracy  
Garcia  
Hearst  
Dellinger  
Wallace  
Hoffman  
Gromyko  
"Lily, Rosemary & the Jack of Hearts"  
Grassy knoll

#### born 1954-1959

Tork  
Drawing silly glasses on picture of Ayatollah  
Pink flamingo  
Larry  
Journalism  
Speed  
Prozac  
a great president, I guess  
Lewis Telethon  
Smith  
Byrne  
Jetson  
Caesar  
Sakharov  
The theme from "The Beverly Hillbillies"  
Rocky Mountain High

#### born 1960-1965

Jennings  
Bake sale for Bob Dole  
Spuds McKenzie  
Curly Joe  
Business  
Beer  
Beer  
One of Teddy's brothers  
& Ben  
Peppermint  
Lynch  
Michael  
Erving  
Codrescu  
The Coneheads sketches on SNL  
Jessica Rabbit

-L.G.